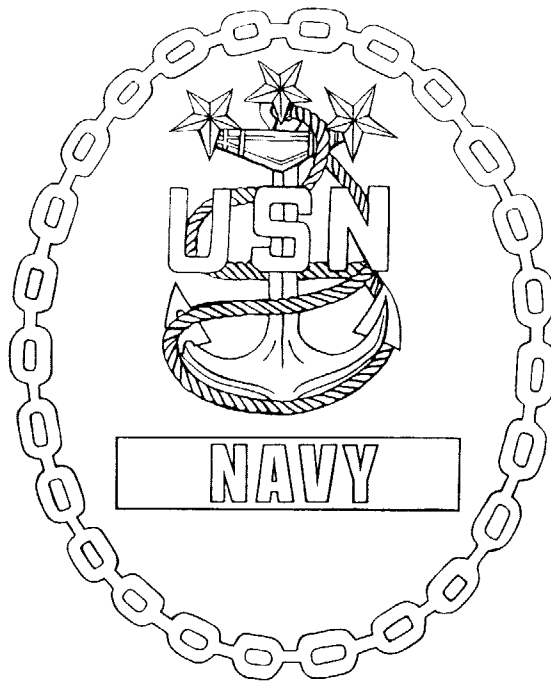


Winds of Change

**The History of the Office
of the Master Chief Petty Officer
of the Navy**

1967-1992

Charlotte D. Crist



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Foreword

When the Office of the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy was created in 1967, the U. S. Navy took a giant step forward in untapping the leadership capabilities of its enlisted force. In the act of adding an extra gold star to a master chief's crow, the senior levels of command were, in effect, saying to the enlisted community, we respect and value your opinion, we need your input, and we will listen and act.

And just as they have met the challenges of war and peace for more than two centuries, the enlisted community has responded in a way that not only silenced the "doubting Thomases," but amazed those who initially believed. No one could have known 25 years ago that the office would grow into the position of influence and credibility it enjoys today. No officer, regardless of his position in the chain of command or Washington bureau, demands more respect, gains quicker access, or is listened to more intently than the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy. Wise Congressmen, Secretaries of Defense and the Navy, Chiefs of Naval Operations, and Naval Personnel and many, many others have benefited from the sage counsel of the MCPON. For his voice is not only the voice of personal experience, but of the broad and ever-changing spectrum of the enlisted experience.

Today, when there are so many avenues of communication open to the modern Navy sailors, it is difficult to imagine the breadth and depth of the gap that the first MCPON was asked to bridge in 1967. Among the most rewarding memories of my naval career are those snapshots of time spent listening to sailors. Whether they were manning riverboats in Vietnam or the engine room of a destroyer underway, if I could get them to talk, I always learned something. But the sailor of the Sixties rarely had the opportunity to speak to someone who could make the changes they suggested, or at least, expressed interest in what they had to say. We were far too busy running our ships, balancing our accounts, or making ourselves look good for the promotion boards. And, if by some miracle, we did validate a sailor's suggestion by making the recommended change, we kept the credit for ourselves. As a result, sailors stopped talking and started walking, right out the door. Or they stayed and convinced younger, impressionable shipmates that no one "up above" gave a damn about what he or she thought.

That's where the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy came in. He went out to the Fleet with a message: "We do care and if you will tell me what's on your mind, I'll make sure that someone listens." I had the honor of working with Delbert Black and Jack Whittet, the first and second Master Chief Petty Officers of the Navy. What giants they were!

Like so many other good ideas that take years to ripen, the MCPON did not work overnight miracles. But, as those of us who have spent our careers as officers know well, there is no one more patient or more persistent than a chief

with a mission. He might yell and cuss, bang on tables or stomp a few toes, but eventually, he will get what he wants...if you give him the time and resources.

Between Delbert Black and Duane Bushey, 25 years have passed. Seven Master Chiefs have worn that extra star on their sleeve. They earned that star in much the same way they earned their first crow as a petty officer. They were tested and approved. Once they had the title, they had to earn it. Credibility gained as a petty officer must grow with each added stripe. Add an anchor, more to prove, add a star, still more. But add that third star and you are out in "no man's land." Those junior to you are looking up, perhaps holding you, perhaps pulling you down. Those above may extend a hand of confidence or, lacking confidence in their own abilities, try to push you down.

Seven men have survived "the winds of change." They learned when to bend and when to stand firm. They adjusted, adapted, and adhered. Nonetheless, they refused to change one common denominator that has served them well throughout their voyage to the top. They continued to practice loyalty up, and loyalty down. They learned a keen sense of balance on the high wire on which we placed them: that bridge between the Officers and the Enlisted.

With this history, marking the 25th Anniversary of the Office of the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, we gain insight into the job, the men who have held the title, their joint and singular accomplishments, the support system they developed over the years, the organization, and, last, but not least, the leadership capabilities of the world's finest enlisted community. In each and every sailor serving the U. S. Navy today lies the potential to be a Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy and the opportunity to make the world's finest Navy just a bit better for their shipmates.

Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt,
U. S. Navy (Ret.)
Chief of Naval Operations
(1970-1974)

Acknowledgments

On January 13, 1979, during the last year of MCPON Bob Walker's term, his journalist, Ronald L. Pulliam, wrote a foreword to his attempt to chronicle the history of the MCPON office up to that date, the office's 12th anniversary.

"The office is very young but the purpose of the office takes on more meaning and value with each successive MCPON," he wrote. "It seems unlikely that the Senior Enlisted billet of any of our services will ever be phased out and, within the next 12 years, it may be this record will be all that can speak for the origins of the office."

During the next 12 years, Pulliam's history remained in a blue notebook on a shelf in the MCPON's office. His successors added the bios and a picture of their MCPON to the book and a few added a sketchy list of accomplishments, but for the most part, Pulliam's plan for an ongoing recorded history never materialized. MCPONs came and went, taking with them their scrapbooks filled with photographs and newspaper clippings, leaving their successor with files on current issues but little of themselves.

In the spring of 1990, MCPON Bushey requested that a "command history" be written on his first two years in office. Searching office files for a precedent on which to compile his history, I found nothing except for Pulliam's record. During the ensuing months, as I conducted my research and interviews to not only provide Bushey with his command history, but to update Pulliam's history as well, I began to feel like a gardener who, having uncovered a long dormant seed, watches in fascination and wonder as it grows and finally blossoms.

That I was not a lone gardener goes without saying. As with everything else in the United States Navy, it took a team effort to bring this book to its final chapter. Key players were: MCPON Bushey, for his patience and trust in letting me do this "my way"; the former MCPONs, for the time they gave me in their homes, workplaces or on the phone; Dr. Dean Allard, Director of the Naval Historical Center for his interest and support; Captain Steven Ramsdell, USN(Ret.) and Commander Stephen Silverio of Naval Aviation History and Publications Division for getting me off to a good start; Lieutenant Commander Richard R. Burgess of *Naval Aviation News*, for guiding me through, chapter by chapter; Joan A. Frasher of *Naval Aviation News*, for editing the book; JO1(SW) Eric S. Sesit of *Naval Aviation News*, for typesetting the manuscript; and Charles C. Cooney of *Naval Aviation News*, for design and layout of the book; former CNOs, Admirals Thomas H. Moorer, Elmo R. Zumwalt, and James H. Holloway, for responding to a sailor's plea for help; Bob Nolan, for his unflagging support of sailors; Ima Black, Helen Whittet, Fran Walker, Carol Crow, Karen Plackett, and Susan Bushey for sharing their memories of life with a sailor; Rear Admiral Bobbie Hazard, for providing some of the missing pieces in MCPON Whittet's chapter; Vice Admiral Jeremy "Mike" Boorda, for making my life and other sailors' lives better; the MCPON staff: PNCM Karl Braley, YNCM Bill

Huesmann, JOC Anita Westervelt, JOC Craig Grisoli, JO1 Joudi Henoud, ADC Jamie Murphy, AWC George Heider, PRC Julie Choriton, and YN2 Dave Haldiman for their humor and camaraderie; JOCM Mark Malinowski, for his kind words and encouragement; *All Hands* Magazine, for allowing me to take what I needed; RM2 Ida Jones, for listening when I needed to talk about what I had learned; BUPERS division leaders, for doing some of my research for me; Jesse Thornton, for understanding why I needed one more year in Washington; and finally, all the sailors I met in Washington or elsewhere whose smiles and positive attitudes added validity to my project.

This history was truly a labor of love. It gave me license to listen to sailors talk about the Navy as it used to be, as it is now, and how it should be. If an “old salt” reads this history and closes it without changing his mind about the office or the men who have served as MCPON, I won’t be disappointed. The fact that he read it at all will make me happy. If a young sailor reads it and opens his mind to the office and future MCPONs, that will make me very happy. It is to them this history is dedicated.



In 1987, the former MCPONs (l-r): Sanders, Crow, Plackett, Whittet, Walker, and Black gathered for the Fall CNO Advisory Panel conference in Washington, DC. It was the last time the former MCPONs met before MCPON Whittet's tragic death in 1989. MCPON Bushey took office in September 1988.

The Pulsetakers

“No matter what we think is the reality of a situation, there is probably another reality on the deck plates, and our people need and deserve leaders who know what that reality is. The Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy is chartered to observe and act, not to supersede the regular chain of command, but to strengthen it and make it work better. His or hers are the experienced eyes that can see the reality of the deck plates. Indeed, he is the pulse-taker of the command.”

Admiral CA. H. Trost, USN,
Former Chief of Naval Operations,
on the occasion of the MCPON
change of office, Sept. 9, 1988.

In 1967, a master chief gunner's mate was ordered to Washington, D.C. to set up an office down the hall from the Chief of Naval Personnel (CNP).

From that office he would serve as the Senior Enlisted Advisor of the Navy, responsible for advising the CNP on matters affecting the morale, retention, career enhancement, and general well being of the enlisted personnel of the Navy. Giving advice to officers, even admirals, would be easy for a master chief with a chest full of combat ribbons and more than 20 years under his belt. But, convincing commanding officers and other chiefs that his job did not pose a threat to the traditional chain of command was another matter.

Nor would it be easy to convince sailors that policymakers in Washington were not only interested in what they had to say but would act on their suggestions.

The master chief knew that bridging a 200-year-old communication gap between the sailors on the deck plates and their leaders in Washington was not going to happen overnight.

For the next 25 years, the master chief and his successors, working within a powerful leadership network that made peoples' needs a priority, developed the tools necessary to build the bridge. Today, sailors can see evidence that their voice is heard. From increased educational opportunities to child care, the Navy has evolved into a people-oriented organization where an individual's needs are balanced with the needs of the Navy.

The bridge itself is a chain of communication that begins at the command level with command master chiefs, continues up to fleet and force master chiefs and ends with the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy in Washington. Through this network, information is transmitted from sailors at the deck plate level to the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) and the Chief of Naval Personnel (CNP) and back down again.

Listening has become an integral part of a leader's responsibilities. Sailors are encouraged to make suggestions and question practices that appear to be unsafe, unfair, or need improvement. Ombudsmen, family service centers, chaplains, commanding officers, and command master chiefs work together as a support network for families. Career counselors are available to provide information and guidance on advancement possibilities, detailing, and training opportunities. Detailers, once viewed as an untouchable force that issued orders arbitrarily, now encourage sailors to call and communicate their duty preferences before orders are cut.

With the closing of the communication gap, the Navy has been able to provide its people with programs and policies that make sense on the deckplates. In return, the Navy gains increased retention, high morale, and fleet readiness. The Navy has come a long way since that master chief first went to Washington.

In the Beginning

In 1964, too many sailors were expressing their dissatisfaction with the Navy by taking their discharge papers and going home.

Retention for first-termers hovered around 10 percent. For a Navy still wrapping up the Berlin and Cuban Crises, the buildup for Vietnam just beginning, and new technology changing the operational arena, retaining good sailors suddenly became a major concern. The days of the disposable sailor were over.

Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) Paul H. Nitze commissioned a personnel retention task force to come up with ways to stem the tide. Headed by Rear Admiral John M. Alford, USN, the task force was organized under the supervision of the Chief of Naval Personnel and reported directly to SECNAV.

For two years, admirals to seamen were asked to give their personal views on improving career retention. The task force encouraged people to write to the director, disregarding the chain of command. For the first time, sailors could tell their leaders what they were doing wrong without fear of repercussion. The response was overwhelming.

The Commandants of the Fifth and 11th Naval Districts, in Norfolk, Virginia, and San Diego, California, respectively, hosted officer and enlisted retention symposiums. Question and answer periods, working groups, and individuals combined to identify specific problems and offer solutions.

All Hands magazine provided another input channel with its "Four Star Forum." Sailors were asked what changes they would make if they were the Chief of Naval Operations for one hour.

Neil W. Lundy, a first class petty officer, responded that he would "eliminate the deadheads and lighten the load."

Expanding on the latter, he wrote: "By doing away with much of the

pettiness such as unnecessary uniform changes, unwarranted liberty restrictions, 'on-board-on-duty' regulations, and similar irritations, the Navy as a whole could realize the same high reenlistment figures presently enjoyed by the submariners. A man in the service at present is far too busy trying to stay out of trouble and live within the many regulatory restrictions to become truly dedicated to anything other than his own skin."

A senior chief yeoman attacked the new Variable Reenlistment Bonus (VRB), asking what the Navy would do when "there are nothing but specialists and technicians to run their offices and shuffle the paper?"

A lieutenant would retire or discharge "people with 24 years' service and not producing because of a short-timer's attitude."

A first class machinist's mate claimed that it was "petty annoyances" that were driving "most of the really good men out of the Navy."

Cryptologic Technician First Class John J. Abraham suggested establishing "a senior enlisted man in the Navy billet" to be "the enlisted man's representative on the Chief of Naval Personnel staff."

All letters to the task force and to *All Hands* were read and considered for merit. At the end of two years, Admiral Alford announced that his final report reflected the views of a cross-section of at least 100,000 Navy people.

On February 14, 1966, the results of the task force findings were published in SECNAV Notice 5420. No less than 115 approved items were ready for implementation. The scope of the recommendations covered pay, afloat and ashore living conditions, education, distribution policies, sea/shore rotation, working hours, advancement opportunities, medical care, and professional dignity and enhancement of the Navy's image.

Under the last category, included in recommendations to increase prestige associated with petty officer and career status, was the following: "Establish a billet for the 'Leading Chief Petty Officer of the Navy' (LCPO) and establish additional billets for 'senior chiefs' in Fleet and type commands and between district staffs. Provide for a 'direct dialogue channel' between enlisted personnel and the LCPO."

Admiral Thomas H. Moorer who later became Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman, was Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet when the retention task force was underway. He recalls that internal and external problems created the need for someone to "go out and talk to the young people in the Navy and learn what they were thinking about."

"We needed to take the common sense approach," he said. "Those were difficult times for the services. The public was demonstrating against the war in Vietnam. Sailors were unhappy and they were bitching. When they say a happy sailor is a bitching sailor, you are talking about a different kind of bitching. A sailor who is happy and performing well will still bitch about chow, liberty, or doing extra watches. But the military is not a democracy and a sailor has to put up with hardships and sacrifices to be in the Navy. He feels a lot better about doing that if the American public is supporting him. In the late '60s, that was not

the case. As a result, we were beginning to have discipline and drug problems among the younger sailors.”

There were other factors working in favor of creating a post for a senior enlisted advisor. The Marine Corps had established a billet for a Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps in 1957 and the Army had followed suit in July 1966. Congressmen saw value in creating a billet for a senior enlisted who could act as a representative of a large, previously untapped contingency.

By the fall of 1966, the selection process was underway to choose the LCPO. All commands were asked to recommend qualified master chiefs who could serve as an enlisted advisor to the Chief of Naval Personnel.

The announcement was greeted with mixed emotions in the fleet. Some heralded the office as a positive step forward. For years, sailors had been discussing such a billet. Only a few, however, believed the Navy would give an enlisted man the power or authority to do the job right. Those doubts persisted long after the creation of the office and, despite its success and longevity, can still be heard in some quarters of the fleet.

But the greatest obstacle for the office and its early incumbents was the fear that too much power would create a circumvention of the chain of command. Officers and enlisted leaders worried that the office would become a threat to good order and discipline. Many commanding officers resented the implication that their commands needed an outsider to come in and solve their problems. And there were still those “old salts” who clung to a somewhat modified “rocks and shoals” discipline which held little regard for new ideas in leadership.

Despite the controversy surrounding the billet, hundreds of nomination packages were sent to Washington. The master chief selection board screened them down to 11. A special board, headed by Rear Admiral Charles D. Nace, Special Assistant for Retention Matters in the Bureau of Personnel (BUPERS), selected Master Chief Gunner’s Mate Delbert Defrece Black. On January 13, 1967, he received his appointment from Vice Admiral B.J. Semmes, Jr., Chief of Naval Personnel, during ceremonies at San Diego Naval Training Center.

Black’s original title, “Senior Enlisted Advisor of the Navy” was changed to “Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy” (MCPON) on April 28, 1967 to conform to the titles given the top enlisted billets of the other services.

The perks accompanying the title have increased throughout the years. Although the title was established in pay grade E-9, as the senior enlisted member of the Navy, the MCPON is paid at the E-10 level. Black’s annual basic pay, plus the \$150 proficiency pay awarded with the title, was \$11,682. Today, the MCPON earns \$3,537.90 a month, regardless of years of service.

The MCPON is distinguishable from other master chiefs by three stars on his hat device and over his rating badge. Like the fleet and force master chiefs, the MCPON’s rating badge has a gold star in the place of a rating specialty mark.

In 1989, the MCPON along with the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps and the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard, received the keys to brand

new homes. The four-bedroom single family homes are located within the compound at Defense Communication Agency in Arlington, within walking distance of the Arlington Navy Annex, headquarters for the Bureau of Personnel. Funding for the MCPON's and the Sergeant Major's home was approved in the FY 1989 Military Construction, Navy Authorization Act. Prior to 1989, MCPONs either purchased or rented their own home or were provided quarters at Andrews Air Force Base or Fort Belvoir.

The term of the office, an early topic of debate between Congress and Defense officials, was originally set at four years. The first three MCPONs served the full term but warned successors that, for health and political reasons, three years was long enough. The seventh MCPON opted to go four years at the request of the CNO.

The Office and the Charter

Today, the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) is coded OP-00A as the primary enlisted advisor to Chief of Naval Operations and PERS-00D in his special advisory capacity to Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Manpower, Personnel and Training)/Chief of Naval Personnel.

In his office or out with the fleet, the MCPON serves as the focal point of a Navy-wide network of senior enlisted advisors. This network, made up of fleet, force and command master chiefs, funnels information in from the fleet and back out again as it addresses issues affecting sailors in fleet or type commands.

During the week-long CNO Master Chief Petty Officer Advisory Panel, hosted semi-annually by the MCPON in Washington, D.C., senior enlisted leaders are briefed on a variety of topics by the CNO, CNP, and other experts in the personnel arena. The panel submits recommendations on specific policy matters directly to the CNO.

The MCPON also serves as the sailor's messenger to Congress, testifying before Senate and House subcommittees on compensation, housing, family, and other quality-of-life issues.

As "pulse-taker of the command," the MCPON travels extensively, listening and talking with sailors and their leaders at locations around the world. In 1988, the MCPON's spouse was appointed ombudsman-at-large, authorizing her to travel with or without her husband. While the MCPON visits with sailors, his wife visits with Navy wives and families, ombudsmen, family service centers, commissaries, Navy exchanges and medical facilities. Her findings are included in trip reports that are submitted with the MCPON's to the CNO and CNP.

The office of the MCPON, located on the first floor of the Navy Annex is staffed by an administrative assistant, a journalist, and a yeoman. Additional assistance is provided by the Shore Sailor of the Year who is given the option of spending one year with the MCPON after selection.

The volume of correspondence and phone calls, as well as an open door policy to sailors, makes the office one of the busiest at BUPERS. Over the years, the MCPONs have individually molded the office to fit their own brand of leadership, philosophy, drive, and ambition. Through them, the office has evolved into the Navy's ultimate enlisted leadership position.

The original charter outlining the duties of the MCPON was established by a BUPERS instruction dated April 28, 1967. While additional duties and responsibilities have been added through the years, the original mission and tasks remain intact. Today, the charter has expanded to read:

“ - The Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, assigned to the immediate staff of the Chief of Naval Operations, serves as the senior enlisted representative of the Navy and acts as the primary enlisted advisor to the Chief of Naval Operations as OP-00A, and the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Manpower, Personnel and Training)/Chief of Naval Personnel as PERS-00D, in all matters pertaining to both active duty and retired enlisted members and their dependents.

- The MCPON serves in an advisory capacity on various boards pertaining to enlisted members. They include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Chief of Naval Operations' Master Chief Petty Officer Advisory Panel (Chairman)

- National Naval Reserve Policy Board

- Navy Uniform Board

- Navy Relief Society Board of Managers

- Master, Senior and Chief Petty Officer Selection Boards

- Quality Control Review Board

- Navy Wives Club of America

- Navy Resale System Advisory Board

- Navy Mutual Aid Board of Directors

- Navy Federal Credit Union Board of Directors

- Military Representative to the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Navy (DACO WITS)

- The MCPON, when called upon, testifies before congressional committees and subcommittees, and occasionally accompanies the Chief of Naval Operations on official trips. The MCPON also travels extensively throughout the Navy.

- The MCPON is responsible for recommendations applicable to the development of effective leadership and training at all enlisted levels and to the attainment of high standards of conduct and general appearance within the enlisted community. The MCPON acts at all times to maintain and promote the chain of command and its associated chain of communications. Further, the MCPON is concerned with existing or potential situations, procedures, and practices which affect the utilization, morale, retention, career enhancement, organizational effectiveness, and general well-being of the enlisted men and women of the Navy and their dependents.”

Selection Process

The selection process for choosing a MCPON has remained basically unchanged since 1967. All commands are encouraged to nominate those master chief petty officers whom they consider qualified to meet the demands of the office. A “conspicuously outstanding” record of diverse duty assignments, leadership, career motivation, and “people oriented” programs is essential. Because the successful candidate will be a personal advisor to the CNO and the CNP, he or she must possess a “high degree of personal dignity and a keen sense of service etiquette.” Married candidates need a spouse who understands the extensive travel and varied public and social commitments involved in the job.

Candidates are asked to include in their package a handwritten statement of the reasons they desire to be the MCPON, along with a nominating letter from their command commenting on leadership, military bearing, oral and written expression, interest and awareness in naval and world affairs, extent of civic involvement, family considerations, and other factors which warrant consideration.

Command nominations are screened by the Senior Chief and Master Chief Petty Officer Selection Board convening in the spring of the year the outgoing MCPON will retire. Final screening from the top ten candidates for the four finalists is conducted by a special selection board convened by the Chief of Naval Operations.

The four finalists and their spouses are then invited to Washington for a flurry of social events and interviews with the CNO, Vice CNO, CNP, and others. The CNO announces his selection to the finalists prior to their departure and via message to the fleet.

While only seven master chiefs have been selected in the past 25 years, thousands of others have applied. At least 30 of those have reached the final level of competition.

Every master chief in the Navy and all career-minded sailors are potential Master Chief Petty Officers of the Navy. As retired CNO Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt points out, if a sailor develops “superior leadership qualities, superior professional competence and superior ability to communicate, then he can become one of the thousand or more who ought to be candidates. Beyond that, it takes the luck of the draw.”

Among the seven who have served, the average age at selection was 45 and the majority had at least 27 years of service. Four of the MCPONs came from the aviation community, three had served as a force master chief, one had been a fleet master chief, two had bachelor’s degrees, two had a warfare specialty, and all seven were married.

The MCPONs have individually served with eight CNOs. MCPON Black served with three CNOs before his tour ended.

Due to the rapport that must exist between the MCPON and the CNO, the

selection may be based on something as elusive as a certain chemistry that develops between the CNO and a candidate during the interview process. When Admiral Zumwalt selected Jack Whittet as MCPON, he was looking for a senior enlisted advisor who believed in the changes he planned to make and had “the charismatic leadership capabilities to persuade vast numbers, scores and scores of senior petty officers in the Navy to understand and support them.”

The Men

The seven men who have served as MCPON shared a common desire to help sailors improve their lot. They have all expressed an immense satisfaction in their ability to “cut through the red tape” in responding to requests from the fleet for assistance.

Master Chief Gunner’s Mate Delbert Defrece Black (January 13, 1967 -April 1, 1971) admits that his advantage was being first. He could set the standard without being judged by it. His leadership style was a combination of presence and authority. With young sailors, he was attentive and courteous, always aware of the example he set. In the chief’s mess, he pushed for leadership. Without demanding it, he got respect, and with that respect came credibility for the office itself.

Master Chief Aircraft Maintenceman John (Jack) D. Whittet (April 1, 1971 - September 25, 1975) was charming, easy going, and relaxed among officers and enlisted. He and Admiral Zumwalt became good friends and together they symbolized the officer-enlisted teamwork that was essential for the changes that Zumwalt was directing. According to Admiral Zumwalt, Whittet was liked by everyone he met.

“They might not have agreed with what he was saying,” he said, “but they still liked the guy.”

Master Chief Operations Specialist Robert J. Walker (September 25, 1975 - September 28, 1979) was a striking contrast to his predecessor. With a granite chin, he still adhered to many of the old ways of doing things. In a time when hair and beards proliferated, he was close cut and clean shaven. He realized early that he could not change the liberal grooming standards of the day but he pushed for standardization and uniformity in the interpretation. He was relentless in his messages to the chiefs: stand up and act like chief petty officers.

Master Chief Aircraft Maintenceman Thomas S. Crow (September 28, 1979 - October 1, 1982) was on the ground floor of the “Pride and Professionalism” era. He pushed for leadership training and stressed petty officer integrity and pride. With Mrs. Crow, Navy wives found an ally, a representative not afraid to speak up in their behalf. She laid the groundwork for future MCPON wives who were willing to take on the responsibilities of a Navy-wide ombudsman.

Master Chief Avionics Technician(Air Crew) Billy C. Sanders (October 1, 1982 - October 4, 1985) was a quiet man, intent on doing the right thing for sailors and for the Navy. He made his own way without the benefit of a close relationship with the CNO. A strong advocate of the democratic process, he encouraged sailors to use their vote to force Congress to listen to the serviceman. He enthusiastically endorsed the decision to outlaw beards and with it a push to the more traditional standards of grooming.

Master Chief Radioman (Surface Warfare) William H. Plackett (October 4, 1985 - September 9, 1988) was the first to be groomed for the office as a fleet master chief. He took over with a solid network of contacts having served first as force master chief for Commander, Training Command, Atlantic and then as Atlantic Fleet Master Chief. With his wife, he helped to strengthen the Navy family image through work with family service centers, ombudsmen, and command master chiefs. He was educated by the Navy through the short-lived Associate Degree Completion Program (ADCOP) and he pushed other sailors to set high educational goals. He was a strong advocate of the Leadership Management Education Training (LMET) program and guided it toward the more compressed Naval Leadership (NAVLEAD) system now in effect.

Master Chief Avionics Technician (Air Warfare) Duane H. Bushey (September 9, 1988 - August 28, 1992) was pulled from the fleet as a command master chief with a reputation for making things happen. In the office, he is a hard worker, driven by self-made deadlines and the haunting feeling that he could or should be doing more for the fleet sailor. Out with the fleet, he puts sailors and officers at ease with a folksy sense of humor and a ready handshake. Bob Nolan, retired Executive Secretary of the Fleet Reserve Association, worked with all seven MCPONs. To Bushey he paid the ultimate compliment: "Bushey reminds me a lot of MCPON Black."

The Issues

Over the past 25 years, a number of issues have required the attention and effort of all seven MCPONs. There are the issues that won't go away, such as equal opportunity and uniforms, and those requiring periodic tweaking, such as advancements and evaluations.

As the office became more established, the MCPON became part of the Bureau of Personnel "chop chain." All issues concerning personnel matters are sent to the office for the MCPON's input or approval. Many issues are initiated by the MCPON, communicated as recommendations to the CNO or the CNP. All the MCPONs have been strong supporters of the chain of command, careful not to overstep the applicable bureaus or codes when working issues through the system. The open door policy to the CNO and CNP has not been perceived or used by the MCPONs as an invitation to "back-door" anyone without first

offering the opportunity to discuss the issue with the concerned individual or command.

Uniform Board membership has involved the MCPON on all major uniform changes through the years. As a voting member, the MCPON may not have approved all the changes but his input was certainly considered. Many of the major changes, like the switch in 1973 to the coat and tie and the subsequent change six years later back to the bell bottoms were CNO directed. As such, the MCPON had been consulted early in the decision-making process.

Initiatives on leadership development can be traced back to Whittet but all the MCPONs following him have made a contribution to the program.

It was also Whittet who was the driving force behind the fleet and force master chief program. Originally called the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Command (MCPOC), the program was based on a recommendation from the first Chief Petty Officer Advisory Panel held in 1971. The program was revised once by Whittet before he left office, and by Walker, Crow, Sanders, and most recently by Bushey.

Shipboard habitability, detailing, sea/shore rotation, selection boards, and quality of life issues such as medical care and housing are among the long term issues with no quick fixes. Since all MCPONs have dealt with these issues, communication between the past and present MCPONs is maintained to ensure continuity.

Changes or accomplishments that can be isolated or credited to any one MCPON are few. Endless hours of discussion, planning, decision-making, lengthy, transient chop chains, and the slow moving machinery of bureaucracy have proved frustrating to master chiefs accustomed to making things happen rapidly in the fleet.

MCPONs who begin their tour with specific action-oriented goals are generally well into retirement before those goals are realized. According to MCPON Walker, the best a MCPON can hope to do is "continue and improve upon, then fade into the sunset for the next person to continue and improve upon."

From the deckplate perspective, it is difficult to see what the MCPON does for sailors. When he is out in the fleet with them, he is more interested in listening than boasting of what he has been able to accomplish. Because his office is in Washington, D.C., some sailors view the MCPON as a "political" figurehead who tells admirals what they want to hear and tells sailors what admirals want them to know. That perception is hard to dispel for fleet sailors who may never have the opportunity to meet the MCPON one on one, in spite of his many trips to the fleet.

Newspaper articles written about the MCPON, columns written by the MCPON in *Link* and *All Hands* Magazine, and video news stories or documentaries attempt to fill that void, but cannot replace the personal touch nor fully communicate a MCPON's personality or commitment.

Still, there are the hundreds of sailors, past and present, who reached out to

the MCPON as a last resort and found the lifeline they needed. A request for a humanitarian transfer granted immediately. An erroneous, but damaging record entry suddenly removed. A frustrating tangle of red tape miraculously smoothed. A non-rated single parent with special needs bumped up on the base housing list.

For those sailors, the MCPON was truly a friend in need. But for the thousands of other sailors who sail through an enlistment or an entire career without a problem requiring help from the MCPON, the master chief who wears three stars remains somewhat of an enigma. In addition to the bureaucratic roadblocks a MCPON must overcome, other variables inherent to the job are the working relationship and personalities of the MCPONs and their CNO and CNP, internal and external pressures affecting the overall attitude of the enlisted community, and the willingness of senior leadership throughout the Navy to adapt and adhere to change.

In spite of the obstacles and the variables involved, the office, through the combined efforts of all seven MCPONs, has played a key role in the Navy's evolution towards a more people-oriented organization and the proven success of the All-Volunteer Force. Today's sailor may work as hard as the sailor in the "Old Navy," but they work in an environment that encourages a sense of pride, professionalism, and dignity.

The tenures of the individual MCPONs are presented in the following chapters to offer a record of the issues, the trends, the attitudes, and the people themselves who helped move and shape the "Old Navy" into the new.



The First, MCPON Detbert D. Black.

The First:

Master Chief Delbert D. Black

January 13, 1967 - April 1, 1971

“When I became Chief of Naval Operations in 1967, our Navy and our Nation, for that matter, was subject to considerable discontent due primarily to the Vietnam War and the way it was being fought. I was aware that the concept of a MCPON had been under study for some time.... I approved of the idea and was pleased to learn upon assuming office that Master Chief Gunner’s Mate Delbert Black had been selected for the post...I was impressed by our first meeting. It was clear to me that here was a man that radiated leadership and self-confidence, but I was still not sure that he was completely aware of the job he faced.... He quickly proved that he understood his job and knew how to handle it. Step by step, MCPON Black established and broadened his scope of activity.... I made several trips with Delbert Black and we had many discussions about the many problems we faced particularly in the personnel area. Boiled down we agreed that it is not those that you work for that make you look good, rather it is those that work for you. They deserve the most of your attention.”

Admiral Thomas M. Moorer, USN(Ret.)
Former CNO

In the fall of 1966, Master Chief Gunner’s Mate Delbert Defrece Black was in a hospital recovering from an appendectomy. When he heard that the Navy was looking for a Senior Enlisted Advisor, he called his wife, Ima, to ask if he should put in an application. The answer was a resounding yes. A former Navy storekeeper, Ima Black was sure that her man was the one the Navy needed for the job.

Captain William Homer, Black’s commanding officer at U.S. Fleet Anti-Air Warfare Training Center, Dam Neck, Virginia, was also convinced that his chief master-at-arms met the qualifications for the job. In fact, he spent so much time working on the application package that it arrived in Washington after the board’s deadline. Ten nominees had already been selected but Black’s package was so impressive they added one more.

Black competed against HMCM Arthur W. Abbey of NAS Barber’s Point, Hawaii; HMCM Frederic H. Andrews, Naval Support Activity, Da Nang, South Vietnam; BMCM Calvin L. Baker, NAS Point Mugu, California; TMCM Samuel H. Bledsoe, Jr., *James K Polk*; AVCM Jack E. Candland, *Constellation*; GMCM Peter De Hart, *Albany*; AFCM Harold D. Noe, Patrol Squadron 30; STCM John

L. Robinson, Jr., Naval Personnel Program Support Activity, Washington, D.C.; BMCM Stanton R. Smith, Fleet Training Center, San Diego, California; and BMCM Garry Vandenberg, *Springfield*.

Bronze Stars, Distinguished Flying Crosses, Air Medals, and a Purple Heart decorated the 11 candidates. Candland was an All-Navy and Interservice tennis singles and doubles champion. All were married, ranged in age from 42 to 52, and had between 20 and 29 years of service.

“My Husband is the Top”

When the board was finished, one man was asked to come to Washington for an interview with the board. The interviewers ignored the man’s wife who accompanied him.

When it was over and they were being ushered from the room, Ima Black turned to the officers and said: “I don’t know who you are going to select, but my husband is the top enlisted man in the U.S. Navy!”

Shortly after their return to Norfolk, the Blacks were called and told he had the job but to keep it quiet until the official announcement was made.

On January 13, 1967, Black reviewed the recruits at Naval Training Center (NTC) in San Diego, California, and was officially appointed Senior Enlisted Advisor of the Navy by Vice Admiral B.J. Semmes, Chief of Naval Personnel. It was Black’s triumphant return to the boot camp he graduated from 26 years before.

After the ceremony, Black’s first official visit was to Naval Hospital, San Diego, where he talked with wounded Vietnam veterans. He also visited the bedside of the commanding officer of NTC, San Diego, who had missed the ceremony because of a bad back. The CO congratulated Black and said he hoped that as Senior Enlisted Advisor, he could improve barracks life for the Navy’s enlisted personnel.

“I’m all for you,” the CO said. “We do everything we can down at NTC but I’m sure we can do more.”

Before Black could move Ima and their nine-year-old son, Danny, to Washington, he had one more stop to make. The Navy thought a short course in career information and counseling would be helpful.

Getting Started

The Blacks bought a home in Washington and he began to settle into his small office on the third floor of the Navy Annex. He was given a staff of one, Yeoman First Class Jerry Scharf.

Letters began trickling in from sailors who had read about the master chief who could talk to admirals. Black spent his first few months in briefings and

going through correspondence. The more he settled into his job, the more he discovered that very few people in Washington had a clear idea of what he was supposed to do.

Looking for guidance, he paid a visit to the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral David L. McDonald. He received less than a warm reception.

“Admiral McDonald said he never believed in establishing the office to begin with,” Black said, recalling the visit 25 years later. “So I asked him,



MCPON Black shares a light moment with Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr.

‘If this is what the enlisted people want, will you give us a chance to make it work?’ And he told me at that point to do anything I wanted to do. I thanked him and that was the last time I had a conversation with him.”

To Black, the CNO’s brush off was like receiving a blank check. Though his official job description was still in the works, he had his own ideas about what he wanted to accomplish.

In his nomination package for the job, he had written: “The office of Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Navy should function as liaison between enlisted personnel and Chief of Naval Personnel. His office should be open to all regardless of rank or rate. He should solicit information and suggestions from any person he feels might in some way benefit enlisted personnel, always keeping in mind his primary concern is to give the Navy man a better life, which

will, in turn, benefit the Navy in reenlistments.”

“The responsibility of this office will be great and varied,” he added, “with a challenge never before faced by any single enlisted man.”

Not Afraid of Challenge

On his way to the Navy’s top enlisted billet, Black had survived the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor aboard the battleship *Maryland*, earned eight combat ribbons in WW II and numerous other decorations, served a tour in recruiting, and put spit and polish into the Navy’s most visible drill team, the Ceremonial Guard in Washington, D.C.

The 45-year-old master chief was not afraid of challenge. He joined the Navy when he was 18 to get off the family farm near Orr, Oklahoma. But he brought his work ethics with him. Through 21 years at sea, from seaman recruit to master chief, he built a reputation as a sailor’s sailor.

“I was determined to be the best sailor I could be so I wouldn’t ever have to go back to that farm again,” he said.

Black had also put much effort into developing his own leadership style and philosophy. When he first came in the Navy, he said leading seamen “ran things because most of the time, he had eight to ten years in and was still a seaman but he knew everything. If you had a problem, you didn’t talk to the chief or the first class. You talked to the leading seaman.”

The leadership structure changed following WW II and petty officers took over the role of the leading seaman. Without a war to fight, practices began creeping in that detracted from the efficiency and morale of some commands. Commanding officers ruled with an iron fist, often making decisions for sailors that Navy Regulations said they could make for themselves.

As a petty officer and a chief, Black became a leader who tried to protect his men against such practices, using the chain of command to make his objections known. He also learned that taking the time to listen and help sailors solve their problems was key to being a successful leader.

As the Senior Enlisted Advisor, he was anxious to get out in the fleet and begin listening to sailors and solving problems.

Three Stars

Black knew he would need a visible sign that he was, in fact, the top enlisted man. Ima came up with a solution. She suggested putting a third star above his rating badge. Black liked the idea and so did the Uniform Board. He took one of his uniforms into a tailor’s shop in Norfolk, Va.

“When I asked the tailor to put a third star above my crow, he looked at me

like I was a drunken sailor out of my mind,” Black said. “When the word got out that there was a master chief with three stars, there were wagers going around whether it was true or not. I had sailors follow me into the head to ask me if I was really a three-star master chief.”

In 1967, Black, like the other senior and master chiefs, wore a chiefs cap device. It wasn’t until December, 1968, that the Uniform Board approved a master and senior chief cap insignia, similar to their collar devices, with one or two silver stars superimposed on the anchor. The MCPON received approval to wear three stars on his cap device while serving in that assignment.

Black knew that a three-star master chief might cause some raised eyebrows in the fleet but in Washington, it would not be enough to open the doors he needed to enter. Help came from Bob Nolan, Executive Secretary and powerful lobbyist for the Fleet Reserve Association (FRA).

“Black was a member of the FRA,” Nolan recalled. “I asked him what the Navy was doing to help him get started and he said not a blessed thing. His new office was a former closet. So small you had to step outside to change your mind. I asked Black if he would like to meet Mendel Rivers, the Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. Black said, ‘Tell me when and I’ll be there.’”

The meeting was set up as a breakfast at the Congressional Hotel in Washington. It went well, according to Nolan.

“Rivers thought the creation of the office was the greatest thing since sliced bread,” Nolan said. “He thought it would give enlisted personnel another avenue for solving problems. He also believed that he would get more down-to-earth answers to his questions from an enlisted person. When he asked me how Black was doing, I told him that the title of Senior Enlisted Advisor should be changed to Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) to match the other services. Rivers agreed. I also told him that even though Black was getting proficiency pay, the senior enlisted man in the Navy should be paid as an E-10. After the breakfast, Rivers’ office dictated a letter to SECNAV Paul H. Nitze on the recommendation.”

The FRA continued to help the office gain visibility by encouraging its membership to stop and visit with Black when they were in the Annex.



From the battlefields of Vietnam to stateside training sites, MCPON Black's second year in office put him on a whirlwind travel itinerary which brought him face-to-face with every level of the enlisted community. In May 1967, MCPON Black inspected the Honor Guard at RTC(W) in Bainbridge, MD.

Nolan also invited Black to go with him on his visits with the hierarchy to talk about personnel issues. "It worked well," Nolan said. "The first thing a MCPON has to do is gain the confidence of his superiors in the bureaucracy of Washington. He can't be perceived as a wise guy but still he should be very knowledgeable. The Navy was very fortunate and blessed to have had a man like Black as the first MCPON."

Making Friends

Black made some friends in Congress on his own. As a native son of Oklahoma, he was invited by Speaker of the House Carl Albert (Democrat, Oklahoma) to make the rounds on Capitol Hill. Before long, Black was being

consulted on personnel issues by Congressmen who wanted the enlisted view.

While the CNO was not alone in his opinion of the office, there were many more who believed that a senior enlisted advisor was the shot in the arm the Navy needed to shore up retention and morale. Among those were the Secretary of the Navy Paul H. Nitze and his successor, Paul R. Ignatius, the Chief of Naval Personnel Benedict J. Semmes, and the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) Mr. James D. Hittle.

“They helped me to see from the top how things operated and how to get things done,” Black said. “I began to get my recommendations in.”

The Pecking Order

From that initial support base, Black began to build the foundation for the office as well as the title. As the first enlisted man to wear three stars, Black discovered that no one in Washington was sure where he fit into official or social protocol. So, he picked his own place in the pecking order. Anyone below rear admiral, he told his yeoman, would be required to make an appointment before coming to see him. If a rear admiral or above wanted to talk to him, he would make the appointment to go see them.

“I wanted everyone to know that the office was not just another office in the Bureau,” he said. “It worked pretty well for official business but there was still a lot of confusion on the social side. I’ve been introduced along with admirals at some things and after the waiters at others.”

In the Bureau of Naval Personnel, the prevailing attitude towards the three-star master chief was one of mild tolerance and curiosity. Black began testing the structural flexibility of the Bureau. He knew that sailors would be expecting him to do more than listen to their problems or suggestions. To do the job right, he was going to have to make the system bend.

“I’d go to someone, a head of a division, and ask them what do I do in this case?” he said. “And they would look at me and say, ‘Well, Master Chief, you make the decision.’ And it didn’t take me long to find out why they would say that. If it didn’t work, I’d take the blame. No one wanted to give you positive help because they were afraid it would come back on them. They wouldn’t say I could not do something, though. They wanted to see if I could.”

From his extensive fleet experience, Black knew that the person behind the stars needed to project them in a way that would build confidence and credibility from the top as well as the bottom.

The Charter

In April of his first year, Black was given a BUPERS, instruction listing his

purpose, mission and tasks, and changing his title to Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy. The instruction cautioned that “individual correspondence of an official nature or matters which concern the traditional and appropriate mode of redress and hearings shall continue to be processed in the normal manner via the chain of command. The office of the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy shall in no manner be interpreted as derogating the effective and necessary method of communication between enlisted personnel and their respective



During his tenure, MCPON Delbert D. Black toured Vietnam to near views or the enlisted sailor. Here he talks with Navy forklift driver at DaNang's deep water piers.

commanding officers accomplished through the request mast procedure.” The instruction was signed by Vice Admiral Semmes. Black was ready to travel. His itinerary the first year was hectic - visiting Newport Rhode Island, the Naval Ammunition Depot at McAlester, Oklahoma, Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, Patuxent River, Maryland, Great Lakes, Illinois, and RTC(W) Bainbridge,

Maryland. In Florida, he visited MacDill Air Force Base with his counterparts from the Army, Marines and Air Force. William O. Woolridge was Sergeant Major of the Army, Herbert J. Sweet, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, and Paul W. Airey, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force. During his visits to shore and sea commands, he became acutely aware of a lack of communication from the policymakers down to the fleet, as well as among the key links in local chains of command.

“When I started out, there were no contacts out in the fleet to call when I wanted to schedule a visit,” he pointed out. “You’d have some strange things happen as a result. I’d set up a visit and when I’d get there, the command would have me scheduled to talk with officers only. That was not the purpose of my visit. You’d also have confusion about seniority, like at an aviation squadron. You’d have the line chief and the maintenance chief. Who was senior? Well, the maintenance chief was a master chief but the line chief is a senior chief and he runs the squadron. Problems like that you would eventually work out but it would distract you from things that are more important. You’d have to spend time sorting them out.”

The Network

Black’s answer came in the form of a fleet-wide network of senior enlisted advisors appointed by Fleet Commanders, Type Commanders, and Naval District Commandants. The authorization to create the positions had already been given by the Secretary of the Navy when he established the Senior Enlisted Advisor (SEA) of the Navy billet. Both were based on recommendations stemming from the 1966 Task Force on Personnel Retention.

By 1969, Black had the network humming from London to Da Nang. SEAs met with troops in their respective commands and listened for developing trends and problem areas. Problems that couldn’t be solved locally or ideas that deserved further development were sent up the line. Some came directly to Black.

While sailors were encouraged to work through their chain of command first, many used the published Washington address given for the senior enlisted man. Black read every letter that came into his office. Very few, he said, were from sailors just looking to air complaints. Most contained constructive suggestions or expressed concerns about orders, housing, educational programs and pay.

“Most individuals were seeking information not available to them or were pointing out areas which they felt needed improvement,” he said.

Correspondence from the fleet increased with every trip the MCPON made. Before responding, Black would go through the Bureau, asking the same questions sailors were asking him. If the answer did not make sense to him, he knew it would make less sense to the sailor on the deck plate. Bureau personnel,

officers, enlisted and civilians, learned quickly that providing the MCPON with satisfactory answers was no easy task. Through his questioning and search for the right answers, Black prodded the system to examine time-worn practices that needed improvement or could be eliminated.

Occasionally, Black discovered that sailors themselves needed to change. While looking for answers to detailing questions, Black learned that many of the problems in detailing could be traced back to the individual's failure to provide information to the detailer. "The detailers have to assign everyone within their duty choices," he wrote in an *All Hands Magazine* article in 1969, "but good personnel management dictates that the individual be placed where he can be best utilized. If a problem develops after a man has been assigned, then I am able to bring the matter to the attention of the rating control branch. The detailers, in turn, try to find a solution to the man's problem."

Much of his mail was about family housing shortages. Aware that the answer he was given was not the one sailors were looking for, Black tried to help them understand the system. He explained that because Congress limits the funding available, the Navy would probably never be in a position to provide quarters for all those who are eligible. He pointed out, however, that he was recommending a cost of living allowance to help families stationed near high cost areas. While he understood that the cost of off-base housing was even more difficult for the lower pay grades, ineligible for base housing, he believed that career personnel should remain a priority on the housing list.

As his visibility grew, so did his determination to make changes.

"It took patience, and more patience, to get anything done," he said. "My philosophy in dealing with the bureaucracy was that there were no such things as wins and losses. There were wins and disappointments and if you felt strong enough and you worked hard enough, you'd turn those disappointments into gains. That's how you accomplished things."

New CNO

In August 1967, Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet (CINCLANTFLT), relieved Admiral McDonald as CNO. As CINCLANTFLT, Moorer had a reputation as a leader responsive to personnel issues. Unlike his predecessor, he saw value in having a senior enlisted man to communicate with enlisted sailors. He invited the MCPON to travel with him on trips to the fleet.

"Rumors were very active at that time," Admiral Moorer recalled. "The MCPON could go down to the chiefs mess and explain to them that everything that was going on could not be blamed on the Navy. Congress shared much of the responsibility. It was a very difficult time to develop an attitude among our people that would help to improve readiness."

Attitude development was just one of the symptoms of the larger problem that was affecting the Navy and the other services in the mid to late 60s. The Vietnam War was sending thousands of young Americans home in body bags, college campuses were erupting in protest of the war, racial rioting was dividing the country on civil rights, and a strange, new youth culture was creating a wide generation gap. The divisions and shifts in American society found their counterparts within the military services.

For the Navy these problems were reflected in high attrition rates among first term enlistees, low retention rates among career personnel, and high absenteeism and desertion rates. MCPON Black tried to make a small dent in desertion rates while he was on a trip to Hawaii with the CNO. He had heard that a church on the island was serving as a shelter for deserters. He requested permission from the CNO to go to the church and talk to any sailors who had deserted. According to Black, the CNO told him to give it a try. So Black put on civilian clothes, went to the church, and began talking to the deserters.

“I had several young sailors talked into returning to their unit,” he said, “but church officials found out what I was doing and they threw me out of the compound.”

Gaining Direction

Black used his visits to the fleet to gain direction in areas that needed immediate attention. By October of his first year in office, he was able to tell sailors at Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Illinois, that he was working on the following issues: increasing the number of permanent career counselor billets to allow every ship in the Navy with a complement of 400 or more to have a full-time career counselor; making the dungaree uniform acceptable in more on-base facilities such as the Navy exchanges and commissaries; pushing for an increase in sea pay from \$15 monthly average to \$110, based on a 74-hour work week for watchstanders underway; eliminating the requirement for out of bounds passes for sailors on weekend liberty with a round trip plane ticket; giving senior enlisted more prestige through increased responsibility, and increased privilege such as having civilian clothes aboard ship.

On Leadership

Leadership, or the lack of, among senior enlisted was one of Black's primary concerns. He believed that with the right kind of leadership, a lot of the problems that he had to fix in Washington could have been taken

care of in the fleet. He told a group of chiefs at Great Lakes that a push was on to get signature authority for senior and master chiefs on certain official

documents, such as service record entries.

On his own job, he told the chiefs "What we accomplish is not on a major scale - a lot of it is personal - the people in the Bureau don't know what an individual's situation is. A man will write to us and explain and then we can go to the Bureau to personalize the system. When they don't have anywhere else to go, they come to us. Anything that goes out of our office is just as if Admiral Semmes signed it. Anything that should be handled on a command level by the chain of command is kicked back to the command."

Especially revealing of his new job, he told them, "No one has told me what I can or can't do."

At the invitation of the Commander, Naval Support Force, Antarctica, Black visited the 1200 men of Operation Deep Freeze, travelling some 32,000 miles to visit all the major U.S. stations on the continent.

"You know what amazed me?" Black said, commenting in a newspaper article on the morale of the sailors in Antarctica. "I never heard a single real gripe. I think this is because of the close relationships between the officers and men, the closest I have ever seen."

On Travel

In 1968, the CNO and MCPON went to Vietnam. MCPON spent most of his time with the Riverine Forces, telling sailors there of an "easing of what the Navy's Inspector General called 'chicken regulations.'"

He also announced a change in the seniority structure in the enlisted ranks, based on the number of years a man holds in rate rather than on his particular rating. In a change to the BUPERS Manual, the distinction was removed between "military matters" and "non-military matters" for determining enlisted precedence and seniority. Under the old system, a boatswain's mate automatically was senior for military matters to others in his pay grade who had ratings other than BM, because BM was at the top of the precedence list. Quartermasters were number two on the list.

Black made two trips with the CNO. Although he believed that having the admiral along was good "publicity to let the enlisted people know you've got the contact," he found it was difficult to do his job.

"With Admiral Moorer, I would come on first and give a talk but I couldn't touch on things that he was going to talk about so it limited me," he said. "Travelling with the CNO, you are here, here and here. I didn't like that at all and I wasn't there long enough to go over to the club or down to the chiefs mess. That's where you get the information."

His charter directed him to travel with the Inspector General, and he did on occasion, but quickly discovered that being with the IG made his visits look like an inspection. Future MCPONs had the IG removed from the verbiage of the

charter, but still referred problems to the IG that couldn't be handled through other channels.

Another Look at Retention

In March 1969, MCPON was the enlisted representative to a four-day Navy-wide Career Motivation Conference at NAS Patuxent, Maryland. Admiral Moorer called the conference through an OPNAV Notice, stating that retention was adversely affecting fleet readiness.

"It is true that external factors over which we have little or no control contribute significantly to this," the notice said. "Nevertheless, in those areas in which we do have a fair degree of control, it appears unlikely that all possible worthwhile actions have been taken. Better retention will result from better motivation. We in the Navy must do a better job at all levels in motivating high quality people to career service."

The recommendations that sprang from the conference sounded familiar. Many of the them, including increased educational opportunities, improved housing and ship habitability, improved legal and medical services, and personnel management had been made by the 1966 Task Force on Retention. Establishing a meaningful sea pay - in 1969 a mere \$15 a month - was among the recommendations. It would be eleven years before sea pay would receive a boost from Congress.

While the recommendations may have had merit and received the blessing of the CNO and CNP, Admiral Moorer explained that many were not implemented "because people were too busy with the war. We were stretching our resources to the limit with our fleet commitments in the Pacific and the Caribbean. It became a matter of priorities. May have been a good idea but the general attitude was, 'Don't bother me with it now.'"

Black encountered similar problems.

"When you made a recommendation, no one knew who was supposed to handle it and who would be the follow up," he said. "I had to do the leg work on everything that went on. Like with service records. I'd request an individual's service record after they would write me with a problem. I would get a record with eight other people's information in there. It was one of the biggest messes I've ever seen. So I went up there. A captain was running it, and he and I sat down. We worked on it and worked on it and finally got it going."

In 1971, the Microfile Conversion Task Force was established to examine the feasibility of applying a micrographics solution to the Navy's records management problems. Authorization was given for conversion of officer and enlisted records to microform.

Paring Down

In August 1969, *All Hands* reported that 33,000 enlisted men and 4,000 officers were going to be released early due to budget cuts. More than 100 “old ships” were scheduled for decommissioning, training and other non-combat operations were cut back, and the Navy’s manpower would be reduced by 68,000 enlisted men and 4,000 officers by the end of FY 70. Reenlistment quality control went into effect, restricting shipover to petty officers or those in pay grade E-3 who had passed a Navy-wide advancement exam for P03. Exceptions were made for non-rateds who had been approved for rating conversion.

Spurred by a recommendation from Black to the CNP, a Petty Officer Review Board was initiated in 1970. During the first board, 4,061 Senior and Master Chief Petty Officers who had received unfavorable evaluations were screened. Seventy five were considered to be below performance standards and were either sent letters of warning, or letters of warning plus a request for special six-month evaluations from their commands, required to receive the approval of the CNP prior to reenlisting or immediately transferred to the Fleet Reserve.

“We had a problem in those days in the chiefs community,” Black said. “Ten percent of the chiefs were doing 90 percent of the bitching and none of the work. We cleared out a lot of dead wood. The word got around.”

Admiral Zumwalt Takes Over

In June 1970, Admiral Moorer was relieved by Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., and began the first of his two tours as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In his parting remarks, he said, “If the Navyman is given a goal and clearly shown the course of his work and the reason for serving his country, he will not only do it well, but do it better than those before him.”

Within two weeks of taking office, Admiral Zumwalt issued the first of his famous policy Z-Grams that would set the tone for his tenure. With Z-02, he established retention study groups (RSG). In 1970, retention for first termers was 11 percent. “No other problem concerns me as deeply as reversing the downward trend of Navy retention rates,” the CNO said, “and I am committing myself to improving the quality of Navy life in all respects and restoring the fun and zest of going to sea.”

RSGs were made up of young officers and enlisted men representative of all branches of the officer corps and a cross section of enlisted ratings. The group brainstormed policies or practices which had a bearing on retention and morale. Their recommendations and reports were presented to the CNO and other key Navy officials on a regular basis.

Z-Grams

Most of the 119 Z-Grams that followed during the next four years were based on recommendations from RSGs. Before MCPON Black's retirement in March 1971, 80 Z-Grams had been issued. Among those having the greatest impact on personnel were: Z-04, 30 days' leave authorization for all PCS; Z-06, civilian clothes aboard ship for PO1s; Z-06, dependent air charter program; Z-07, Navy sponsor program; Z-09, meritorious advancement in rate of career POs; Z-12, civilian clothing on shore establishments; Z-15, statement of earnings; Z-21, compensatory time off; Z-25, forces afloat liberty policy; Z-32, reenlistment ceremonies; Z-57, eliminating abrasive regulations (Mickey Mouse); Z-66, Equal Opportunity; Z-75, sea/shore rotation; and Z-80, MCPOs on E-8/E-9 selection boards.

Black addressed the rapid changes in his "From the Desk of the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy" article in the December 1970 issue of *All Hands*.

"There comes a time when tradition becomes a hindrance and change is necessary. I believe we have reached that time. Changes are taking place in the military and in the Navy today which will bring about a better Navy tomorrow. In the CNO's change of command speech, he stated that his two primary objectives are: to achieve a balance in force levels in order to meet the present threat as well as the acquisition of new ships and weapons to meet future threats; and to achieve a balance between the demands we make on our people and the rewards of a naval career. His stress on people as a major priority in these objectives can only mean a change in our way of thinking about the Navy's men and women."

While Black believed the changes were needed, in retrospect, he believed, like many in the fleet, that the rapid fire approach taken by the CNO was creating problems for commanding officers and the chain of command.

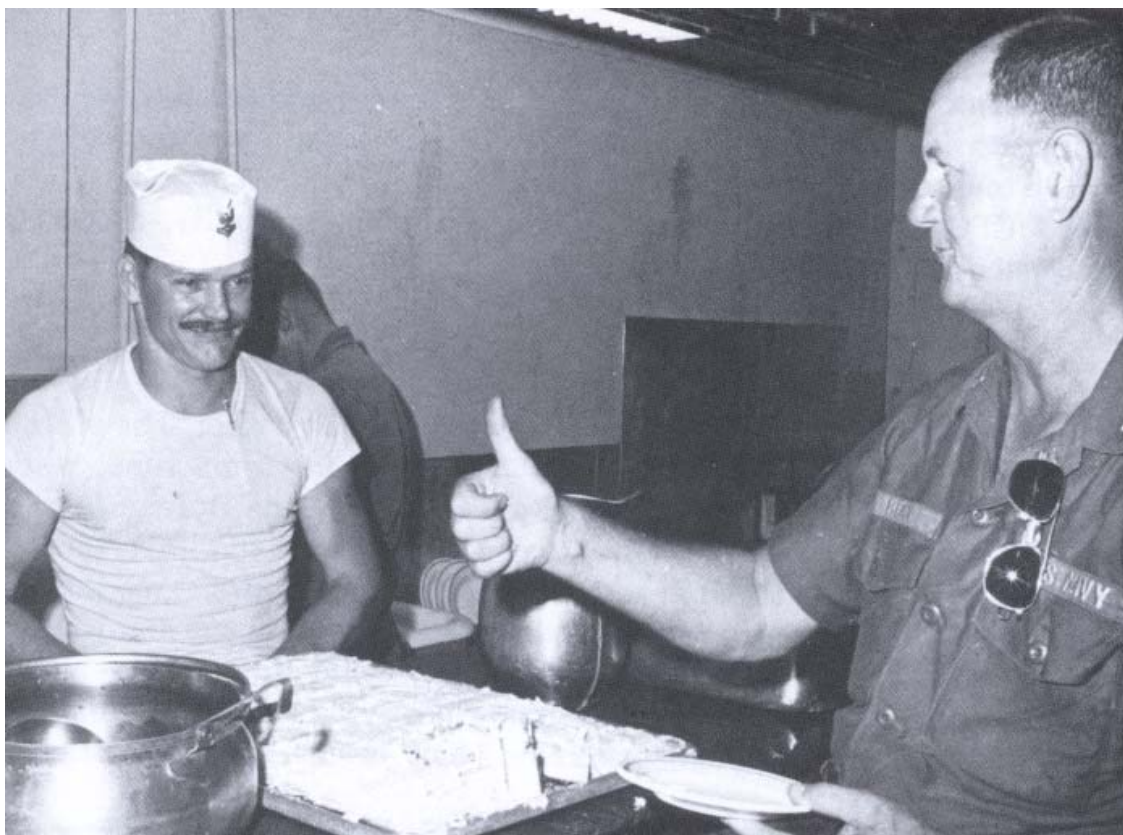
"Z-grams were coming out of Washington as message traffic," he said, "so the sailor in the communication center would be the first to know. Sailors on the messdecks would be talking about 'Z's' latest changes before the skipper even saw the message. That created quite a bit of heartburn in the chain of command."

Strong Leadership Needed

Black knew the Navy would need strong leadership to weather the changes. "The chief petty officer can, and should, take the responsibility of keeping every man under his leadership informed," he wrote in one article. "If one of his men has a problem, he has a problem. There should be no excuses. There is a solution to every problem, and it should be pursued until his man is satisfied that every means has been exhausted in the effort to find a solution."

He advocated leadership training: "I feel very strongly that we need to

improve our leadership abilities to keep pace with the high level of technical skill. The rapidity of advancement has caused a need for



Thumbs Up! MCPON Black gives his approval of the food at the Naval Support Activity at Phu Bai.

establishment of more leadership classes at the command level. My feelings are that we must have a chain of command from top to bottom, but even more important, we must have a channel of communication and understanding."

Black's comments on leadership inspired response from the fleet. One chief stirred the pot with his letter to *All Hands*: "In recent years we seem to have become obsessed with the 'let's keep this one, big, happy family' idea in our approach to discipline. It has reached a point where many of our personnel seem to be willing to overlook faults in their juniors or bypass anything that may cause people to think that they are not 'nice guys.' We are all in a military organization, not a popularity contest!"

Another chief wrote: "Officers and petty officers become nice guys for the

following reasons: the decisions they make are not supported; they do not know how to lead and their seniors don't know how to teach them; or they have been shorn of their authority."

A first class wrote: "Making a decision that will please everyone is next to impossible. Some young men who enter the military service today seem to spend as much time learning how to circumnavigate the rules as they do learning them."

Like the opening of floodgates, communication became the hi-word of MCPON Black's tenure. It wasn't enough to turn the tide of retention nor to turn back the problems in leadership, drugs and discipline that surfaced in the seventies, but it was a beginning. The Navy was beginning to learn that just because things had always been done a certain way didn't mean they had to be done that way in the future.

The MCPON's office had been established with credibility, doors had been opened, and changes were being made.

Saying Good-bye

In his farewell message prior to leaving office, Black wrote: "The office of the MCPON is at a point now, and it has been for some time, where cooperation with various branches and offices here in the Bureau is at its best. What has been accomplished is a good example of the importance of teamwork and working through people for people. It appears to me that the time to 'stay Navy' has never been better. I can tell you about many career Navymen about to retire, who are wishing they could stay on longer. I am one of that group. But there comes a time when every Navyman must take his leave of active duty. It just seems that NOW is such a tempting time to linger on a bit longer."

During his retirement and change of office ceremonies held at the Washington Navy Yard, Secretary of the Navy John H. Chafee, Admiral Zumwalt and Vice Admiral Dick H. Guinn made remarks. The CNO presented Black with the Distinguished Service Medal.

Today, MCPON Black and Ima are retired in Winter Park, Florida. Still active in the Fleet Reserve Association and as a member of the USO board of directors, he continues to be available to help sailors with their problems. Ima is also an active member of the FRA Auxiliary, the Navy Wives Club and the CPO Wives Club.



MCPON John D. Whittet.

Zumwalt's MCPON:

Master Chief John "Jack" Whittet

April 1, 1971 - September 25, 1975

"For Jack Whittet the Navy was the greatest activity on earth. As the MCPON, he retreated only in the face of logic and debate; his only fear was of those who could not think. True patriotism required Whittet to act at times contrary to what the Navy required. The Zumwalt changes were inspired by imagination, without which reform is deadly, and spurred by Whittet's common sense, he put his trust in evolution, not upheaval, to help create conditions under which a sailor could be more productive and of more account. Jack Whittet had a great capacity for quick appreciation and rapid execution of new ideas, adapting his own experience to their implementation. His performance as the MCPON, in one of the most difficult periods of our Navy, showed once again the extraordinary capabilities of our Navy enlisted men."

Admiral David H. Bagley, USN(Ret.)
Former CNP

In the foyer of the Washington Navy Yard Chiefs Club hang the portraits of the seven Master Chief Petty Officers of the Navy. On the evening of May 7, 1989, the light over the second MCPON, John "Jack" D. Whittet, flickered briefly, then went out. The next day, club employees gathered around the darkened portrait, talking in hushed voices. They had just received the news that MCPON Whittet had drowned in a diving accident the previous day.

As news of Whittet's death spread through the Navy, many remembered him as "Zumwalt's MCPON," a label that had both positive and negative connotations, depending on which side of the fence the speaker was in the tumultuous years between 1970 and 1974. No other period in the history of the U.S. Navy could claim as many changes or as much internal turmoil.

So significant were the reforms introduced by Chief of Naval Operations Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., that it was rare to find anyone serving in the Navy at that time who remained neutral. You either believed in the CNO's reforms or you didn't. MCPON Whittet did and it was his job to convince those who didn't.

Jack Whittet had been in the Navy for 28 years when he became MCPON. He loved it with the dedication and commitment of an adopted child. He was seventeen when he left his home in Providence, Rhode Island, to enlist in the Navy. It was 1943 and the Navy was still two years away from victory over Japan in the Pacific. After almost a year of training as an aviation machinist, Whittet was sent to Guam with Torpedo Squadron 38. He won his combat

aircrewman wings flying 31 missions from the carriers *Lexington* and *Anzio*.

After the war, he changed to the PB4Ys serving with east coast squadrons and making a deployment to Saudi Arabia. When the Korean War broke out, he was aboard the carrier *Bon Homme Richard* with Carrier Air Group 102, which flew combat air strikes against the North Koreans. During the next 15 years, he would serve at various air stations, with a patrol squadron, two fighter squadrons, two attack squadrons, and as the flight crew plane captain for the Commander, Naval Forces at the Continental Air Defense Command at Colorado Springs, Colorado.

In the meantime, he was advanced to Aviation Master Chief (AFCM) in 1967. He was serving as the Aircraft Maintenance Control Chief and the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Commander, Fleet Air Argentia, Newfoundland, when he was recommended by his commander for the job of MCPON.

Selection

While the selection process was underway, Whittet was transferred to Norfolk to serve as the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Commander, Naval Air Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet. From there, he was summoned to Washington on November 8, 1970, as one of the four finalists.

The first day, Whittet and his wife, Helen, along with HMCM Herbert V. Miller and his wife, Elizabeth; BMCM Edward R. Pellom, and his wife, Glenice; and AFCM Newsman E. Wolf, and his wife, Oliva, made office calls on the Chief of Naval Personnel (CNP) Dick H. Guinn. In the evening they were guests of honor at a cocktail party attended by the CNO and other officials.

On the second day of their visit, Admiral Zumwalt issued one of his most famous Z-grams, Z-57, labeled "Demeaning and Abrasive Regulations, Elimination of." In his book *On Watch*, Zumwalt said his original title was "Mickey Mouse, Elimination of," but it was changed by his Vice CNO, Admiral Ralph Cousins, who feared that "Mickey Mouse" would be considered "flippant."

Z-57 was an order liberalizing Navy regulations or practices on hair styles, beards, sideburns, civilian clothing, dungaree uniforms, conditions of leave, motorcycle operation on base, and others. The successful candidate for MCPON would spend a good part of their tenure clarifying the intent of Z-57 to the fleet.

Six days later, the CNO announced Whittet's selection as MCPON Black's relief.

On March 31, 1971, Whittet was appointed the second Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy by Vice Admiral Dick H. Guinn, Chief of Naval Personnel. The letter of appointment differed from the one given MCPON Black four years earlier. In addition to reflecting the title change from Senior Enlisted Advisor, the new MCPON was given the added responsibility for advising the Chief of Naval

Operations, as well as the CNP, “on matters affecting the morale, retention, career enhancement and general well being of the enlisted personnel of the Navy.”

The Whittets moved into Quarters J at the Washington Navy Yard.

Getting Underway

Like his predecessor, Whittet used the first few months to learn his way around the Bureau and visit a few East Coast commands. According to Admiral Zumwalt, he immediately began including Whittet in his daily lineup at 7:15 a.m. when his “mini-staff” reported on significant happenings over the past 24 hours in intelligence, operations, etc. The MCPON was there to report “any astonishing news in the personnel field.”

“He was a full fledged member of the inner sanctum that was dealing with daily developments,” Zumwalt said. “He had complete access to me.”

Whittet also worked closely with Rear Admiral David Bagley, the Assistant Chief of Naval Personnel for Personal Affairs, (PERS P), the new post created by Admiral Zumwalt. PERS P was the Navy Ombudsman within the Bureau of Naval Personnel. All Navy people could write or call the office for help on matters concerning conditions of service and personal affairs. The ombudsman office also provided data, based on its contact with Navy people, for initiating programs or modifying existing ones.

In his first two articles in *All Hands*, Whittet said “enlisted have been talking about their grievances and problems for years. A few people have listened, but very little has actually been done. Now there’s someone at the top who is listening and taking action. We’ve moved further ahead in the past 11 months with our personnel programs than we have in the past 100 years. People are realizing that if we treat our sailors like responsible individuals, most will respond accordingly.”

Whittet inherited the majority of the major personnel programs initiated through Z-Grams. By the time he took office, the Navy had changed dramatically. Petty officers and above were allowed to have civilian clothing aboard ship. Beer machines were authorized in senior enlisted barracks. Motorcycles were allowed on bases. Commissary hours were extended to give sailors more time to shop after working hours. Detailers were going out to visit sailors at sea or shore commands. A more lenient leave policy was in effect for post deployment periods. Inspections were limited in the 30-day period before and after ship deployments. Sailors were no longer required to have out-of-bounds or liberty passes. The dungaree uniform was authorized for wear to and from work. A liberal grooming policy allowed sailors to express their individuality through longer hair and beards.

Other changes emphasized improved services in areas such as disbursing,

household effects, dispensaries, and tailoring. Procedures for checking in and out were simplified to reduce waiting time. Personnel involved in providing such services were carefully scrutinized and proper training was stressed. Those individuals who performed below standards were reassigned.

Paychecks also received attention in Z-Grams. Where deemed more convenient, cash replaced checks, rapid processing of disbursing claims was stressed, personal check cashing ceilings were raised, and the Navy Finance Center instituted a 24-hour service desk to respond to callers around the world. For the first time, a statement of earnings was made available on request to show sailors where their money was coming from and where it was going.

Whittet praised one command that he had visited for proving that “ZGram-ism” really works.

“It works because of communications up and down the chain of command,” he wrote in his *All Hands* column. “I did not hear one major complaint or gripe. There were some minor problems, but the command is aware of these and is seeking solutions. Morale was outstanding and a feeling of esprit de corps was everywhere.”

Whittet explained that such a command starts with “the sincere concern of the commanding officer, down to their officers, chief petty officers, petty officers and finally to the seaman, until there is a relationship of mutual respect and understanding.”

Retention at this command, he pointed out, was at 54 percent first-term while the Navy’s average was “about 15 percent.”

Retention, Recruiting and Uniforms

In the early seventies, recruiting and retention drew even greater emphasis in anticipation of the President’s announcement to end the draft. The Department of Defense set July 1, 1973 as the target date for achieving an all-volunteer military force. While the Navy did not take draftees, it was estimated that as many as one-third of those who joined the Navy were reacting to the draft. Making the Navy more attractive to prospective enlistees and to those already in was a motivating factor behind many of the programs and incentives that surfaced during the next few years.

During this time, “crackerjacks” or “bell bottoms, the traditional uniform worn by sailors up through E-6, came under renewed fire. While “bells” had been the subject of change for many years, a Navywide survey conducted in December 1970 showed that 80 percent of the 1,700 enlisted men polled favored a switch to the double-breasted coat uniform worn by officers and CPOs.

Whittet supported the change and reported to the CNO that sailors were complaining that “bells” did not make them feel like men. At the same time, the CNO was getting letters from wives who said they were “embarrassed to go in

the store or to church with their husbands dressed like little boys.” They wanted to know why their husbands couldn’t wear suits like grown men. With the anti-military feeling in the country, sailors were being made targets of



Left to Right: Retired MCPON Delbert and Ima Black and, MCPON John “Jack” and Helen Whittet.

ridicule in their “crackerjacks.”

On June 13, 1971, Z-Gram 87 went to the fleet, advising of a uniform change that would put recruits to admirals in the same type of uniform. The new uniform would be issued to recruits beginning July 1, 1973. All sailors would be wearing the new service dress blues by July 1, 1975. Also announced was the pending demise of service dress khaki for officers and chiefs, effective July 1, 1975.

The announcement of the change to what later became known as the “salt and pepper” uniform heralded the beginning of more than a decade of upheaval in uniform guidance. The dungaree uniform had also been changed from denim to a 50-50 blend of cotton and nylon with a light blue pullover shirt and dark blue trousers that had straight legs, cuffs, and fore-and-aft creases. The new uniform was designed to be more attractive for wear to Navy exchanges, commissaries and from and to work. In the following years, the constant revisions to uniforms

exacerbated the problems the fleet would have in reaching stability in the wake of “Z-gramism.”

In August 1971 *All Hands*, Whittet chided “a few thoughtless individuals” who were “abusing the trust and respect given them” through the new privileges.

“The Chief of Naval Personnel and my office receive a large number of letters and phone calls from ‘concerned people’ about the continued violation of dungaree uniform regulations,” he wrote. “A few thoughtless sailors still persist in using the dungaree working uniform as a liberty uniform. We all know, or should know, that this was not the intent of Z-57.”

The wearing of beards also became a point of contention among active and retired Navy men. Admiral Zumwalt defended his policy by pointing out that Navy regulations had always authorized beards, but many commanding officers would not allow them.

“My Z-Gram just really said obey the regulations on neatly trimmed beards,” he recalled. “All my living CNO predecessors came into remonstrate with me on the beards. I took great pleasure in taking them out in the hallway there in the Pentagon and showing them the portraits of our mutual predecessors in the Navy with long beards and I told them we were just getting a little more conservative.”

Resisting Change

The “old salts” throughout the Navy resisted many of the changes that Zumwalt initiated. A poll conducted in the spring of 1971 showed 86 percent of enlisted and 80 percent of officers approved the new policies. The majority of those not happy with the new order were senior people, both enlisted and officer. The rapidity and volume of change, rather than the changes themselves, created much of the opposition. Commanding officers and senior enlisted personnel had difficulty in absorbing and interpreting the rapid influx of Z-Grams into command policy. A perception grew in the fleet that Z-Grams were directed to the sailors, bypassing the traditional chain of command. Commanding officers, accustomed to running their ships under established guidelines, chafed under the CNO’s intervention. Senior petty officers found themselves caught between junior personnel eager to explore their newly granted privileges and officers who sought to maintain some sense of control and authority. The result was an inevitable weakening of senior leadership, both officer and enlisted, in commands unable to adjust.

Responding to concerns in the fleet about the number and speed of the changes introduced through Z-Grams, Whittet acknowledged that “the potential and fulfillment of individual human and common natural resources are being sought in ways that often challenge established practices.”

“In this battle against petty and sometimes obsolete regulations and requirements, as well as demeaning practices,” he wrote in his February 1972 *All*

Hands article, “some Navy people, particularly some of our more senior personnel, seem to have raised a banner of doubt.”

“Far from stripping senior enlisted men of their authority, which is a sometimes heard complaint, the hand of enlisted leadership has actually been strengthened. And the overwhelming majority of our senior petty officers are now ardent supporters of the Z-gram changes and developments.”

Admiral Zumwalt credits Whittet with “converting a large majority of the enlisted opposition.”

“When I would go to San Diego or Norfolk and so on, Jack would have me meet with chief petty officers to take their questions,” he said. “Of course, he was on the phone or out there every day with them helping to convert these fellows.”

“Some neither myself nor Jack were able to change,” he admitted, “and they just left the Navy when their time was up.” In his *All Hands* article, Whittet addressed those leaders who “were not willing to put forth the time and effort” to adapt to the changes and who had “reached the point where they just don’t give a damn anymore.” He called them a “lead link” and urged them to “step forward and join the team.”

Developing the Chain

In July 1971, Whittet was instrumental in the issuance of Z-Gram 95 which established the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Command (MCPOC) program. Twenty-three master chiefs became either Master Chief Petty Officers of the Fleet, Force or Command for the Pacific and Atlantic Fleet, Naval Forces Europe, Naval Air Force Atlantic and Pacific Fleet, Naval Air Training Command, Amphibious Force Atlantic and Pacific, Submarine Force Atlantic and Pacific, Naval Communications Command, Cruiser/Destroyer Force Atlantic and Pacific, Mine Force, Service Force Atlantic and Pacific, Naval Security Group Command, Supply, Medical and Civil Engineer Corps, Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Illinois, San Diego, California, and Orlando, Florida.

To add visibility to the title, the “MCPOCs” and the MCPON removed their rating specialty marks from their uniforms and replaced them with a gold star. The two silver stars above the MCPOCs eagle’s wing tips were replaced with two gold stars. They were also authorized to wear a Senior Enlisted Advisor (SEA) badge on their uniforms. Today, career counselors wear a badge similar to the original SEA badge, which was changed in the 1978 Uniform Regulations to a gold badge.

According to Whittet in an *All Hands* article, MCPOCs would hold semiannual meetings on the East and West Coasts to exchange ideas on issues concerning enlisted personnel. From those meetings, recommendations and suggestions would be sent to the CNO, making the MCPOCs a CPO Advisory Board. In the last Z-Gram he would issue before leaving office, the CNO revised

the program to include E-8s and E-7s, allowing commands without master chiefs to have representation.

In 1972, Whittet began using the term “enlightened leadership” to describe the petty officer who has an “open and obvious respect for the self-esteem and general welfare of his shipmates.”

“The enlightened leader will recognize individual differences and vary his appeals (positive and negative) accordingly,” he wrote in *All Hands*. “He will try to create a sense of trust, self-discipline, and responsibility that emphasizes the dignity and judgment of the individual Navy man or Navy woman as well as the operational needs of the Navy.”

In conclusion, he wrote, “I believe the enlightened leadership practiced by our Chief of Naval Operations has proven it can raise the quality of Navy life for young and old alike.”

Fleet Tempo

Even “enlightened leadership” could do little towards improving the quality of Navy life for fleet sailors in 1972. On March 30, 1972, North Vietnam launched a major offensive against South Vietnam. The number of ships and units in Southeast Asia doubled. Reinforcements came from the Atlantic and Pacific Fleets, impacting schedules and operating tempo all over the world. At shore stations, manpower was decreased to meet fleet requirements while support demands increased.

Admiral Zumwalt sent a message to the fleet: “As the current effort continues, its effects will be strongly felt throughout the Navy and some of the guidance established in previous NAVOPS must be temporarily held in abeyance. One of my greatest concerns had been to ease the burdens on our operating forces, and to enhance the attractions of a Navy career. Many of our efforts to do so are being strained by the continuing crisis.” He urged compassion and understanding to minimize “individual hardships resulting from the increased tempo.”

In August 1972, Zumwalt and Whittet visited 21 ships deployed off the coast of Vietnam. In his “WestPac Trip Observations,” the CNO wrote: “We now have in the Seventh Fleet 37 percent of our end FY 73 carriers (6 out of 16); 30 percent of our cruiser/destroyer - or warship-types (63 of 207); 25 percent of our amphibians (17 of 68); 51 percent of our replenishment ships (31 of 61); 24 percent of our total ships (145 of 595); and 41 percent of our VF!VA (aircraft) Squadrons (29 of 70).”

“We cannot come close to one-in-three deployment ratios. With Atlantic Fleet (LANTFLT) carriers deploying to WestPac, all carriers are now averaging 6.6 months in CONUS between 7.6 month deployments; present deployments for both LANTFLT and Pacific Fleet (PACFLT) are projected as an average of 8.6

months.”

Certain ratings in the Seventh Fleet were critically low, according to Zumwalt, increasing time at sea.

“Of the career-enlisted men in the 23 ships,” Zumwalt reported, “630 men (16 percent) have been at sea continuously for more than four years. The impact of increased time away from homeport and tempo of operations is largely borne by the very group we wish to retain - approximately 77 percent of the men in the Seventh Fleet are first-termers.”

Yet, in Whittet’s *All Hands* wrap up on the trip, his mood was not so gloomy.

“From CNO to seaman, from flight decks to fire rooms, the spirit was there,” he wrote. “What deep pride, what serious professionalism. I cannot remember when I have been more impressed with the readiness and morale of our combat forces.”

The Vietnam cease-fire in January 1973 helped to create a more favorable climate in the fleet for Zumwalt’s personnel programs. By FY 74, retention for first-termers had risen from 10 percent in FY 70 to 32.9 percent.

Equal Opportunity

While the majority of Z-Grams were aimed at die-hard Navy traditions, a few were targeted at the toughest foe of all - prejudice. In 1948, President Harry S. Truman had established a policy of equal opportunity within the military, declaring equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin.

Also in 1948, Congress passed the Women’s Armed Services Integration Act, allowing females, previously held in reserve status, to join the Regular Navy. The number of women was limited to two percent of the total force. On July 7, 1948, the first enlisted woman was sworn into the Regular Navy. In 1967, the two percent ceiling on enlisted women in the Navy was eliminated. According to Admiral Zumwalt, the Navy had practiced “tokenism,” in granting equal opportunity and in 1970 was “literally a racist and a sexist institution.” Z-66, issued on December 17, 1970, addressed the undercurrent of insensitivity surrounding minorities and the institutional discrimination in some activities and programs. It provided for the appointment of a Special



Master Chief John D. Whittet takes over office of the MCPON from MCPON Delbert D. Black.

Assistant for Minority Affairs for every command with direct access to the CO. Suitable cosmetics and other products for black personnel and dependents were to be stocked in Navy exchanges, ship's stores would stock black grooming aids, and qualified barber/beauticians for black personnel were to be sought for base and station shops. A representative selection of books, magazines, and records by and about black Americans were to be included in Navy libraries, wardrooms, clubs, and other reading areas.

In spite of the CNO's efforts, racial conflicts erupted aboard the carrier *Kitty Hawk* and the oiler *Hassayampa* in October 1972 and aboard the carrier *Constellation* in November 1972. Naval and Congressional investigations were held but failed to identify discrimination as the primary cause of the conflicts. The CNO reaffirmed the Navy's stance on equality, placing the responsibility on commands to "create an environment that makes equal opportunity a reality and discrimination, for any reason, an unacceptable practice."

To increase awareness and sensitivity to discriminatory practices, all hands were required to attend race relations education seminars by July 1, 1974. The second phase of the Navy's race relations program would concentrate on institutional and personal affirmative action for equal opportunity and the continuing effort to eliminate racism.

In a closely related policy statement issued in November 1970, Zumwalt had stressed proper utilization of the human resources available to the new Navy. Entitled, Human Resource Management, Z-55 expressed the CNO's concern and desire to achieve a high degree of competency and professionalism throughout the Navy. Drug and alcohol abuse control, race relations, intercultural relations and human resource management were targeted for improvements through

Human Resource Development facilities. By September, 1972, the first two Human Resource Development Centers opened in San Diego, California, and Newport, Rhode Island.

Z-55 also established a task force to make recommendations concerning people and communication areas in the Navy. The result was a recommendation for the basis of leadership training in the Navy. A model was developed for a ten-week command development course first offered in 1972. A Human Resource Management School, covering equal opportunity, race relations, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, and intercultural relations, was established in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1974. Also that year, Leadership and Management Training (LMT) became a sponsored program with 15 authorized training sites. Approximately five percent of Navy middle managers, (E-6s, E-7s and O-1s through O-3s), attended the school annually. By 1976, the number of courses had grown to 157.

Zumwalt also attacked the institution of male domination in the Navy by opening up ratings traditionally closed to women, including some sea-going billets. In 1972, anticipating the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, Z-116 introduced initiatives that would enable the Navy to make optimum use of women if and when ERA or statutes liberalizing the terms of female service became law. The ultimate goal was assignment of women to ships at sea. A pilot program for assignment of women to ships was initiated aboard the hospital ship *Sanctuary*.

Z-116 also authorized limited entry of women to all 70 enlisted ratings. Three years later, in 1975, 15 sea-intensive ratings were closed to women. Five of those reopened in 1978. Other ratings have been opened and closed during the past decade in an attempt to provide additional opportunities for women while preserving an acceptable sea/shore rotation for men. Currently 84 of the Navy's 102 ratings are open to women.

Also in 1972, the DOD All Volunteer Force (AVF) subcommittee began pushing the services to develop plans to double the number of women in all services by 1977. The Navy established a goal of 2,000 women in the unrestricted line officers and 20,000 enlisted women by 1975.

As women in the Navy began breaking down barriers, some outspoken Navy wives objected to the integration of women into seagoing routine, claiming that even stable marriages were threatened. They were joined by a surprising number of Congressional leaders and the retired military community.

"For many Navy traditionalists, it is even harder to give up the notion that their beloved service should be all male than to give up the notion that it should be all white," Zumwalt said. Three years later, Zumwalt would praise the performance of women in the non-traditional ratings.

"Many who doubted the ability of women to perform effectively in jobs that were once assigned only to males have by now seen the light," he wrote. "For too many years women have been a much neglected resource in nearly every facet of American society. I, for one, am extremely proud of the continuing high level of achievement exhibited by our enlisted women and am confident that as more

doors are opened to them, they will be better utilized and our 'One Navy' concept will be strengthened."

Drugs and Alcohol

Drug and alcohol abuse was the subject of a number of policy statements by the Secretary of the Navy and Zumwalt from 1971 to 1974. SECNAV John H. Chafee addressed the issue through an instruction that granted exemption to "members of the naval service who make voluntary disclosures" of drug use and possession. In Z-94, Zumwalt explained that the program would enable drug users to obtain needed medical and other rehabilitative help without the fear of punishment on a one-time basis.

In July 1972, DOD began its random urinalysis drug testing program. All members of the armed forces became subject to random, periodic testing to detect possible drug abuse.

That same year, the first naval alcohol rehabilitation center was opened in Norfolk, Virginia, with expansion planned to 14 naval hospitals worldwide.

Dignity and Worth

Through his people programs, Zumwalt sought to "instill at all levels an attitude which clearly recognizes the dignity and worth of each individual and creates an environment in which every officer and enlisted man will be treated with respect and accorded the trust, confidence, and recognition each human being wants and deserves."

Top performers were singled out and recognized nationally through the Sea and Shore Sailors of the Year program and the Recruiter of the Year. Meritorious advancement was granted to reward hard workers who could not advance through regular channels. The warrant officer program was opened to enlisted men in the top four pay grades. E-7s were granted certain signature privileges already granted to E-8s and E-9s.

Evaluation and advancement policies were revised. In 1974, BUPERS announced a new plan that would give more emphasis to job performance and leadership and less emphasis to written examination scores. Designed to benefit good performers whose exam scores fell below the cut-off scores, the plan began with lowering the exam score cutoff for the February 1974 exams. It expanded to include prospective E-4s through E-6s with the August 1974 exams. E-7s, E-8s, and E-9s would not be included in the plan until fiscal year 1976. For those interested in exam results, a two-minute recorded message at the new Education and Training Program Development Center in Pensacola gave callers information about probable and actual dates that examination results and late advancement

lists would be released, effective advancement dates for those frocked, and general “how to” information.

Whittet was instrumental in establishing an E-7 selection board in 1974, eliminating the need for meritorious advancement for E-6 candidates. Under the selection board process, increased emphasis was placed on performance and leadership in determination of final multiples for E-6s.

Personalizing the System

Two Chiefs of Naval Personnel, Vice Admiral Dick H. Guinn and his relief, Vice Admiral David H. Bagley, guided BUPERS through the administration and management of the new or revised programs ushered in by Z-Grams.

“Personalizing” the detailing process also played a role in the retention effort. Aware that a trip to Washington was out of the question for many sailors, detailers began making more trips out to the fleet, armed with fleet commanders’ requisitions and enlisted assignment documents. Whittet accompanied a group of eight officers and 59 enlisted detailers on a sweep through San Diego, Long Beach, Lemoore, and San Francisco, California, Hawaii, and Whidbey Island, Washington.

“It was gratifying for me to watch so many sailors express their duty preferences one day and have their orders in hand the very next day,” he said in his *All Hands* article following the trip. “It is significant that over 620 first-term reenlistment commitments were obtained and orders issued. We have come a long way in improving communications between the Fleet and BUPERS since I received my first set of orders.

Part of that change was spurred by the 1966 Retention Task Force that created Whittet’s office. Included in its recommendations was a fully-integrated computer assisted distribution system and a centralized process beyond the existing three Enlisted Personnel Distribution Offices (EPDOs):

EPDO Atlantic, BUPERS, and EPDO Pacific. In July 1972, allocation and assignment came under BUPERS and manning control was placed under the newly created Enlisted Personnel Management Center (EPMAC) in coordination with the Manning Control Authorities (MCAs). The MCAs were designated as CINCPACFLT, CINCLANTFLT, COMNAVRESFOR, and BUPERS. During the 1970’s, all enlisted Permanent Change of Station (PCS) orders were produced through the Navy Enlisted System (NES), an automated order writing system.

Further improvements were made in 1978 when EPMAC created an automated input, the Readiness Information System (RIS) J File, to the NES order writer for seamen, firemen and airmen detailers. In 1981, automated input was extended to the rated detailers. In 1987, with the advent of more advanced computer technology, a second enlisted order writer was created with a plain English format capability. Orders are written through Enlisted Assignment

Information System (EMS), combining the functions of several systems already available in making assignment decisions. It calculates and tracks PCS funds, produces plain language orders, and tracks and reserves training quotas with real time information from the schools themselves.

Today, 40 percent of the orders are produced through EAIS, and 60 percent are still produced through NES. Efforts to streamline the detailing process continue. Meanwhile, sailors are kept up-to-date on news concerning their ratings and career opportunities through *Link Magazine*, a product of one of Zumwalt's early retention study groups.

Six More Years

Almost midway through his tour as MCPON, Whittet took the CNO up on his offer in Z-108 to allow "well-qualified senior petty officers" continuation of service beyond 30 years. On January 16, 1973 he reenlisted for six more years. The press release announcing the event, held in the CNO's office, said Whittet felt he still had a "great deal to offer the Navy."

"I don't think a career Navy man should automatically feel that he has served out his usefulness to the service at the end of 30 years," the release quoted Whittet. "The Navy has done a lot for me and I think I still have a lot to contribute. That's why I made the decision to reenlist for another six years."

According to the release, Whittet would revert back to his rating of Master Chief Aircraft Maintenceman when he left the MCPON office. But one year later, he changed to the new Master-at-Arms rating.

Changing the Watch

Zumwalt rescinded all 120 Z-Grams prior to his retirement July 1, 1974, confident that his initiatives had been infused into the Navy directives system and that his successor, Admiral James L. Holloway, III, could expand upon them.

One month before leaving office, he presented the Distinguished Service Medal (DSM) to Whittet "for his outstanding contribution to the lives and careers of Navy enlisted men and women." With the presentation, Whittet joined retired MCPON Black and Senior Chief Radarman Larry H. Nowell as the only enlisted men to hold the DSM. Nowell received the medal for his work during combat operations in Vietnam in 1972. The DSM ranks fourth in precedence and is signed by the Secretary of the Navy.

Admiral Holloway was commander of the Seventh Fleet in 1972 during the height of operations off Vietnam. He was the first nuclear trained CNO and had spent most of his career on the operational side of the Navy. He took office convinced that the Navy needed time to heal in the wake of Vietnam and the

“social revolution” both inside and outside the Navy. His programs would focus on quality rather than quantity, increased training and education, and putting pride at the forefront of Naval service.

In April 1975, after two working conferences with the Fleet Commanders-in-Chief, the CNO announced five major goals: readiness, flexibility, offensive capability, balance, and personnel professionalism and stability.

“The achievement of these goals lies in the hands of people,” Admiral Holloway said. “Therefore, every man and woman must strive for the highest possible degree of personal pride in work and professionalism. This requisite professionalism cannot be achieved without constant emphasis on stability in our daily lives. Programs which develop professionalism and stability must receive the highest priority.”

The MCPON he inherited adapted to the change of pace. In his final year and a half, Whittet’s *All Hands* column dealt with subjects such as ecology, Navy wives, humanitarian transfers, the rating classification system, and advancement. In his September 1974 column, he reminded “workaholic” sailors that dedication “beyond normal expectations” can be detrimental.

“Medical authorities have revealed that rest periods away from duty provide benefits to morale and motivation - two key factors in maintaining maximum efficiency,” he wrote. “Hard work will continue to be a Navy tradition! But, I wholeheartedly endorse the efforts to create an atmosphere that makes it possible for people to take leave when they desire. In the long run, it’s for our own good to have a time for work and a time for play.”

In one of his last columns, Whittet praised the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Command Program, describing a conference attended by the fleet and force master chiefs in Washington.

“Their two-day conference included meetings with 16 authorities who supplied expertise in a wide range of topics of direct concern to enlisted personnel and their dependents,” he wrote. “After each presentation, the master chiefs were given an opportunity to ask questions of the experts and provide input.”

Before leaving Washington, the master chiefs met with the CNO and the CNP, listened to their views and presented some recommendations of their own.

“The conference reaffirmed my belief that feedback from the fleet is invaluable to everyone working at the Bureau level,” said Whittet. “By utilizing information obtained from Navy men and women, programs which might have otherwise adversely affected enlisted personnel have been favorably modified. When modification has not been the appropriate solution, steps have been taken to provide a better and more meaningful explanation of policy decisions.”

In his farewell article, Whittet cited the “leadership and inspiration” of the three Secretaries of the Navy, two CNOs, and three CNPs, with whom he had traveled and worked as MCPON.

“Under the leadership of these men, I have witnessed many beneficial and necessary changes within the Navy’s enlisted structure,” he wrote. “These

changes have had a significantly positive effect on the enlisted community as is reflected in retention figures which have risen from 11.6 percent in fiscal year 1971 to 39.9 percent for fiscal year 1975.”

He recognized the efforts of his staff, the MCPOCs, his family, and his shipmates.

“I never traveled to a ship or station where I was not greeted warmly,” he said. “I will always be thankful that I had the opportunity to work and serve with the world’s finest men and women, my shipmates in the United States Navy.”

Following a change of office ceremony September 25, 1975, Whittet began his “twilight tour” with the Human Resources Management Program at Naval Amphibious School, Coronado, California. Within a few months after arriving at Coronado, he submitted his retirement papers. In 1976, after retiring quietly, he served on Admiral Zumwalt’s campaign staff in an unsuccessful bid for the U.S. Senate from Virginia. Whittet then served briefly with the Noncommissioned Officers Association. Following that, he went into a home repair service with retired Admiral Worth Bagley, the brother of Vice Admiral David Bagley, who had served as Whittet’s CNP.

In 1979, he became director of morale, welfare, and recreation at Coronado Naval Amphibious Base, where he remained until his death. Whittet, described by his family as an “experienced scuba diver,” drowned when he was entrapped in rocks while diving in the Colorado River in Arizona.

Admiral Zumwalt spoke at the memorial service held for Whittet on May 11, 1989, at the Coronado base chapel. Attending were the current MCPON Duane R. Bushey, and former MCPONs Delbert Black and Tom Crow.

“I miss him badly,” Zumwalt said of Whittet during a recent interview. “We loved each other. We were like a band of brothers in everything we did.”



MCPON Robert J. Walker.

Middle of the Road:

Master Chief Robert “Bob” Walker

September 25, 1975 - September 28, 1979

“The lean defense budgets and the continuing erosion of public support for the armed services that followed the Vietnam War were palpable impacts on the morale of our military people in all services. The Navy was faced again during this difficult period of having to do more with less. Professional performance from our sailors had to be the key to the Navy’s ability to carry out its mission, and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Robert Walker must be given a major share of the credit for the stability, professionalism, and strong morale that characterized the Navy’s enlisted ranks during these trying times. Bob understood the problem, he was 100 percent behind the solutions, and he worked tirelessly to promote the kind of Navy that all of our people could be proud of. Best of all, he had an enormously heightened sense of personal responsibility and dedication to the service through the Fleet. I had the greatest respect and admiration for the MCPON Bob Walker when we served together, and today I have profound gratitude for his help to me and his service to the Navy. In my book, he was a real hero in those difficult times.”

Admiral J. L. Holloway III, USN(Ret.)
Former CNO

Four years after joining the Navy in 1948, Robert J. “Bob” Walker was a 23-year-old first class radarman.

In a Navy where a leading seaman could have served 20 years and most first classes had at least four or five hashmarks, he learned quickly that a sailor needed more than marks under his crow to be a leader of men.

“We had a couple of boatswain’s mates on my first ship who were God to anyone lower than them,” he said. “I suffered at their hands a couple of times but I got my revenge because I advanced rapidly. It wasn’t long before we switched places and I started kicking their rear ends instead of them kicking mine.”

Radar was still in its infancy when Walker chose it as his career field. His recruiter advised him that advancement would come quickly.

“I joined the Navy to make it a career,” he said. “I enjoyed it from the day I joined until the day I retired. I will say, though, that as I walked into the gate at Great Lakes, Illinois, for boot camp, I had a great deal of misgivings of what the hell I was getting into. We were marching down the street and I heard this voice, a very friendly voice from one of the barracks windows, holler out, ‘Is anybody from New York?’ I thought, ‘Oh my God, I’ve found a friend.’ I hollered back, ‘Yeah!’ And of course, he came back with an obscenity. My morale went even

lower but in about two days, everything changed.”

His first ship was the destroyer *McKean*. He made his first Western Pacific (WESTPAC) deployment during the Japanese occupation when U.S. ships were stopping and searching all Japanese ships. Walker recalls that liberty in Oriental ports was good back then.

“You could have a good time over there on five dollars,” he said. “The cost of things was ridiculously low.”

Discipline aboard ship made liberty even more precious.

“You were guilty until proven innocent,” he pointed out. “One time I worked off six or eight hours of extra duty because my wash cloth at the end of my bunk was an inch off. The master at arms was an S.O.B. who walked around with a ruler. You can bet your bottom dollar that I had it right the next time. There’s an old saying that you get used to hanging if you hang long enough. People just didn’t know any better. We didn’t see that as being cruel and unusual because we didn’t know anything else.”

According to Walker, chief petty officers with lots of red hash marks were typical “because in those days it was hard to stay out of trouble. If someone said something and you made some kind of gesture they didn’t like, they’d just put you on report and you’d go to captain’s mast. The captain always backed the petty officer.”

First Taste of Leadership

Walker was given his first taste of leadership as a seaman.

“The leading radarman, the seaman, went home on leave and I was selected to be the leading radarman,” he said. “I had the job for 30 days. I found out that I could get along pretty doggone good without him. I could handle it. That was my first indication of what being a leader was like. After that I wanted to continue to have the responsibility. It was a helluva let down when he came back off leave.”

The commanding officer of the *McKean* set an early example of successful leadership for the young petty officer.

“He knew the entire crew, went around everyday and talked to everybody, went into the compartments. We were the only ship in the harbor that had good liberty. When we were in port, liberty started every day at 11 a.m. Everybody worked hard until liberty call. He really rewarded us for the job that we did. Everything was so effortless, just amazing. I tried to glean from him some of his leadership qualities because he was certainly very, very successful. We won the Battle E two or three times in a row. That was unbelievable!”

Eight years after joining the Navy, Walker was a chief petty officer, the highest step for enlisted. Warrant ranks, W-1, 2, 3, 4, was the next step. Two years later, in 1958, the Navy joined the other services in creating pay grades E-8 and E-9.

“After being a chief for two years, I’m starting to say, ‘Hmmm, there’s got to be something better,” Walker said. “I was ambitious and I’m still that way, and I just couldn’t see staying a chief petty officer although I thoroughly enjoyed it. So when they opened up the E-8/9, I said, ‘Oh boy, that’s it.’”

In 1961 he was selected for E-8 and two years later for E-9. At 34, he attracted a lot of attention as a young master chief with only three hash marks.

“There were times when individuals in the other deck ratings would look down upon those individuals in the more critical ratings like electronics, radar. They would make all kinds of inappropriate remarks, which I won’t go into, but I ran my department in a fashion where no one had any doubts that I wouldn’t kick their rear ends. I didn’t have any problems. I might have been a young master chief but I was a sailor too.”

Eyes on the Office

In the late 1960s, Walker was at Great Lakes Naval Training Center as Director of Training, Radarman “A” School, when the announcement for the position of a senior enlisted advisor for the Navy was sent to the fleet. His command recommended him.

“I didn’t make it to first base,” he said. “I was very junior. But it was nice to be recommended. But I tell you one thing. I know a lot of people thought I was an egotistical whatever, but I told people I was going to be Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy one day.”

When nominations for MCPON Black’s relief were solicited, Walker did not compete.

“I was trying to get some smarts into what it was I needed to really stand a chance,” he said.

From 1970 to 1972, he served as senior enlisted advisor and leading chief for combat systems training at the Fleet Combat Direction Systems Training Center, Dam Neck, Virginia. He built a reputation there for his refusal to allow students on the base unless their haircuts and beards were “regulation.”

“When the Z-gram for beards came out,” he said, “I sent a couple of training teams back to their ship. Wouldn’t let them come on base with long hair or beards. Locked horns with some submariners but I never lost. My captain believed the same way I did.”

In 1972, Walker’s rating was renamed “Operations Specialist” (OS).

At the height of the Zumwalt era, Walker was transferred to the carrier *John F. Kennedy* where he served as leading chief of the Operations Department. After a few months, he was given the title of master chief petty officer of the command (MCPOC).

“I talked the executive officer into doing morning inspections again,” he said. “Christ, there’d be guys with damn earrings in their ears! I’d take one of the

senior Marines around with me. When I found a sailor with earrings, I'd say, 'Son, if you don't take the earrings out, you're going to the brig.'"

Haircuts didn't miss the MCPOC's scrutiny either. "If you came aboard needing a haircut, whether you were ship's company or visiting, we obliged you," Walker said. "And we made sure you had one when you left. We didn't have many visitors. We had a squared away ship but it was a happy ship and very few people got into trouble. Ashore, everybody knew a *Kennedy* sailor because he had a good short hair cut."

When the policy on civilian clothes aboard ship was liberalized, the *Kennedy* MCPOC had his own policy.

"I had all the departments hold a seabag inspection and I made everyone get a full seabag," he said. "If that fit in their locker and they had room for civilian clothes, wonderful. We had a seabag inspection once a quarter. If you didn't have a full one you were going to mast. Same rule for everybody. A lot of civilian clothes left the ship."

In November, 1974, Vice Admiral Frederick H. Michaelis, Commander, Air Force Atlantic (COMNAVAIRLANT) surveyed his master chiefs for the job of Master Chief Petty Officer of the Force (MCPOF). He selected a black shoe, OSCM Bob Walker.

When nominations were solicited for the job of MCPON, Walker felt he was ready.

"I had around 27 years in the Navy, 19 years at sea. I felt it was a good time frame and having been just selected as force master chief of AIRLANT, and a black shoe at that, I thought my credentials were pretty damn good. So AIRLANT put in a helluva good package for me and I made all the wickets."

While the final eleven candidates were being screened to four, Walker was on a trip to Brunswick, Maine, with Vice Admiral Howard E. Greer who had relieved Vice Admiral Michaelis as COMNAVAIRLANT.

"Everyone was assembled. The admiral was making a presentation to someone. The aide, a flag lieutenant, went up to the admiral and told him he had a phone call. He went off to take the call, came back to a doorway where I could see him and held up four fingers. I made the final four."

The other three finalists were PNCM Joe D. Pierce of Chief of Naval Air Training, Corpus Christi, Texas; NCCM Charles H. Griva, Commander Naval Surface Force Pacific (COMNAVSURPAC); and UTCM Robert L. Evans, BUPERS (PERS-5). The four, with their wives, were sent to Washington for interviews and social events. Fran Walker remembers the cruise they took on the Potomac one evening in the Chief of Naval Operation's barge.

"We were the only enlisted on board except for the crew," she said. "We were all very nervous. Never done anything like that before."

Walker remembers the interviews with the CNO, Admiral Holloway, and the CNP, Vice Admiral James Watkins:

"From the moment I sat down with Admiral Holloway, I felt that we could have a very special, working relationship. I remember thinking that I probably

blew the interview because I disagreed with him on some things but overall, I thought it went very well. The CNP asked me what the Navy could do to increase the retention among radarmen. I told him I didn't really know of anything because it was a very sea intensive rating. At that time, the only doggone thing a radarman could do ashore was be an instructor. Then I told



MCPON Walker observes a helicopter mechanic at work.

him if he opened up some general billets to radarmen that might help but I wasn't sure what that would do for retention."

“I Cried”

When the candidates were sent home on Friday, they were told that the winner would receive a phone call sometime during the weekend.

Walker admits he was “quite nervous” that weekend, but Fran remembers the weekend a bit clearer.

In a house with six children, the phone was put off-limits. “He forbid us from using the phone,” she said. “We had to go next door to the neighbors to make a call. You couldn’t even look at him or talk to him. He was a nervous wreck.”

But a call from Washington never came.

“When he went to bed that Sunday night, he was really down,” Fran Walker said of her husband.

At work the next day, Walker received a call from Master Chief Griva, a fellow candidate.

“He asked me if I had been called and I told him no. He said he had just been called and told that he didn’t make it,” Walker remembered. “So, time continued to pass that day and I still didn’t hear anything. Then the chief of staff called and said the admiral wanted to see me right away, that we had some problem. When I walked in, the chief of staff said it would be a few minutes, the admiral was on the phone. He was on the phone all right...but he was on the phone with the CNO. When he called me in, he had a big smile as he handed me the phone. When Admiral Holloway told me I had been selected, I cried. I went back down to the office and called Fran. I was so emotional she couldn’t figure out whether I had won or lost.”

Fran said her husband’s call left her confused and worried.

“It didn’t make any sense,” she said. “I didn’t think he would cry about it if he lost but I couldn’t make heads or tails out of it. But when he came home that afternoon, his mouth almost didn’t fit through the door he was smiling so hard. He was one happy guy.”

The Turnover

When Walker went to Washington for his turnover with Whittet, he discovered that his predecessor wasn’t anxious to leave. Because he had reenlisted for six more years midway through his tour, Whittet was not retiring from the Navy. That created an immediate and future problem for Walker.

“I told him that staying in the Navy after serving as MCPON was the dumbest thing he could do,” Walker said. “He didn’t want to have a ceremony when he left office but I told him that it was my time in the sun. I was going to have a ceremony. So we did. It wasn’t like the one we had when I left, but we had one.”

During the final week before the change of office, Whittet presided over the

CNO MCPO Advisory Panel, with Walker looking on. Within a few months after Whittet transferred to Coronado, he put in his papers to retire.

Settling In

Walker moved his family to Washington, preferring to buy a home in Woodbridge, Virginia, to accepting the home offered at Andrews Air Force Base.

During his first office call with the CNO after taking office, Walker said Admiral Holloway briefed him on his plans to bring the Navy back to a “middle of the road” policy.

“There was tremendous pressure on the CNO from the four-star community to go out there and really hammer people,” Walker said, “but we both felt that would have been totally wrong. The mentality and the feelings of the population had changed. Totally changed. You just couldn’t do that. So he did the right thing. Absolutely brilliant.”

“Middle of the road discipline,” according to Walker meant “enlightened leadership willing to listen.”

“In the communication process, if you really listen,” he explained, “then you are effectively communicating. You can put out all good information and good words, but if you don’t offer that listening mode as a larger part of the time, then you aren’t communicating. That ability to listen is what brought the Navy back to the middle of the road.”

Having been out in the fleet during much of Z-Gram era, Walker was aware of the problems that had been created.

“The feeling was that, while some of the changes had to take place, the manner in which the changes were made was unfortunate,” he said. “In many cases the senior chain of command was never consulted and the only way they knew what was happening was to get that Z-Gram. It caused a great deal of negative reaction, negative feedback, which caused a very serious breakdown in the chain of command. That time frame was much more liberal than had ever existed before or since, but you’ve gotta make sure that the people who work for you are informed and feel part of the process. That caused a lot of senior officers to become very, very bitter. A lot of them just said to hell with it.”

In his first *All Hands* column, Walker listed his goals as improvements to the advancement system, command indoctrination programs, leadership skills for petty officers, management skills for chief petty officers, human goals programs, and retention.

“In order to be an effective MCPON,” he wrote, “I have established standards for myself and my staff. The most important of these concerns communications. A great deal of emphasis is being placed on communications these days and rightly so. Communications among all levels is extremely important and is the fulcrum upon which our organization functions.”

In addition to promising an “open door” policy for his office, he invited his shipmates to call or write about their problems or concerns with Navy issues.

“I value constructive criticism and recognize its importance in the decision-making processes,” he wrote.

Deeper Goals

In retrospect, Walker remembers that his goals went much deeper than the ones listed in his first article.

“I wanted to see the Navy go back to traditional uniform, groomed sailors, discipline, and individuals who had respect for themselves because they were proud of what they were doing,” he said. “I believed that I would have enough support from enlisted leadership who wanted to see the Navy come back to its rightful position. I really felt good about it.”

Going back to the “traditional uniform” would take several years, but Walker recalls that, in his first office call on the CNO as MCPON, the admiral promised that as soon as they could go back, they would.

“The admiral felt the same way I did about what I called the ‘funeral director’s uniform,’ but he told me that the change was too far along to reverse it. He said if we tried to go back too quickly, we’d be investigated for fraud and abuse because so much money was already invested in the new one. He told me that if I would go out and publicly support the new uniform, that before I left office, we would be making the move back to the old one. And that’s what happened.”

As requested, Walker appeared to support the new uniform publicly. In an *All Hands* article in which he responded to some of the questions he was receiving from the fleet, he wrote: “I have received numerous letters in the past few months requesting that I support a return to the ‘traditional’ enlisted uniforms. None of these letters have convinced me that the Navy is not heading in the right direction uniformwise.”

Moving Back

Moving the Navy back in the areas of discipline and grooming was a different matter. Using the chain of communication available through the MCPOF/MCPOC program, Walker directed the chiefs community toward what he described as the five “Principles of Professionalism”: technical expertise; job skill; leadership; motivation; and personal integrity and responsibility.

Leadership was Walker’s favorite topic. He believed that leadership qualities were “learned,” not innate qualities and he worked for four years to develop meaningful leadership training programs. Through his efforts, a petty officer

indoctrination course became mandatory for all new E-4s. New chiefs were also required to take indoctrination courses. Leadership management courses, initiated but not fully implemented during Admiral Zumwalt's tenure, gained new emphasis and focus.

Through his connection with the other services via their senior enlisted advisors, Walker pushed and gained more quotas for senior and master chiefs at the Army's Sergeant Major Academy and the Air Force's Senior Enlisted Academy. Not content with sending Navy people to other services for leadership training, he initiated a recommendation to create a Navy Senior Enlisted Academy.

"I had to jump up in the middle of a lot of desks and do a lot of cussing to get that one through," he said. "A lot of the senior officers opposed it because they were afraid that with that kind of training, senior enlisted could take officer billets. Not even the CNO was completely sold on the idea. But! finally got it approved."

In a recent interview, retired Admiral Holloway said the cost of the Academy, in dollars and manpower loss to the fleet, was the primary concern associated with approval of the Academy. "We were looking at the impact on the fleet, both short and long term," he said. "And there were concerns that graduates would leave the Navy too soon after graduation to benefit the Navy."

In the October 1, 1979 *Navy Times* article, summarizing Walker's tenure, the Navy's "tentative approval" of the establishment of a Senior Enlisted Academy was announced. A pilot class of 16 senior and master chiefs was due to convene in late 1981 at Newport, Rhode Island, according to the article.

Off-Duty Education

Though it met with some resistance, off-duty education became a primary retention tool for the All-Volunteer Force. In his April 1976 *All Hands* article, Walker explained the educational management system Navy Campus for Achievement (NCFA), designed to coordinate the Navy's off-duty education programs with on-duty education and training programs.

"Beginning in March 1974, NCFA established a network of professional educational advisers who absorb much of the paperwork and interviewing formerly done by Educational Services Officers (ESOs) and career counselors," Walker wrote. "NCFA advisers can assist you in formulating your educational or training goals. Or, they can evaluate your work experience and education, and counsel you concerning the completion of high school, vocational/technical training, or college through off-duty study. They'll answer your questions concerning the availability of educational funds, such as the Tuition Assistance program or in-service use of the GI Bill."

Programs under the NCFA umbrella were the "Contract for Degree," tailored

to allow students to accumulate credits from various sources and apply them all toward a degree program at a participating college or university; Program for Afloat College Education (PACE) which provides instructors from contracted colleges and universities for classes on board ships throughout the fleet; Predischarge Education Program (PREP), allows non-high school graduates to take classroom instruction in english, math and social sciences leading to a high school diploma; Defense Activity for Nontraditional Educational Support Program (DANTES), which provides a general battery of tests (CLEP) in which a student can earn up to six semester hours of college credit; Serviceman's Opportunity College (SOC), an association of two-and four-year degree completion programs that provide maximum credit for military training schools and nontraditional education; and tuition assistance which gives up to 75 percent of tuition costs for classroom courses or allows qualified military members to use veteran's benefits like the GI Bill. Since 1974, NCFA has continued to expand with the addition of colleges, advisors, and NCFA offices at Naval facilities. Off-duty education has become an important career enhancer and receives additional points from selection boards. It is also considered part of the Navy's role in preparing its citizen sailors for a successful return to the civilian work environment.

Tough Taskmaster

As MCPON, Walker demanded a lot from his senior enlisted advisers. In 1977, he changed the MCPOF/SCPOC/CPOC organization to a Fleet, Force and Command Master Chief program through revision of OPNAVINST 5400.37A.

"We really accomplished things," he said. "If they didn't produce, I kicked them in the rear end. I told them if they didn't use their command master chiefs, they weren't going to be a fleet or force."

To communicate with the senior enlisted advisory network, Walker began a monthly newsletter in 1976 called *The Word*. During the next four years, *The Word*, changed in 1979 to its current form, *The Direct Line*, addressed all the issues that concerned the MCPON and the senior enlisted advisers. "Control of sloppy beards," the discontinuation of the practice allowing COs to forward copies of enlisted commendatory correspondence to the Bureau for service jackets, the petty officer quality control review board, recruiting, a modification to the accelerated advancement program for "A" school graduates, and news on pay, leave, and retirement were among the subjects covered in 1976 issues.

The Word

In January 1977, via *The Word*, Walker urged the enforcement of a 1973

policy setting the proper forms of address of enlisted personnel. Eleven years earlier, the SECNAV Retention Task Force had recommended “revising the customs for formal oral address, including the introduction of enlisted men and for written address to provide for addressing petty officers (except E-7, E-8 and E-9) as ‘Petty Officer...’ and non-petty officer grades as ‘Seaman...,’ ‘Fireman...,’ etc., instead of addressing those groups by their last names only.” The 1973 policy was issued through BUPERS NOTICE 1000.

In that same issue of *The Word*, the November 1976 recruiting results were given. The Navy Recruiting Command had enlisted 8,542 persons, achieving 99.8 percent of its goal for all regular and reserve enlisted programs. More than 86 percent of the active duty non-prior service enlistees were eligible to attend “A schools and 79.2 percent were high school graduates.

Other news items from 1977 issues of *The Word*:

- Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld announced that military services will no longer issue undesirable discharge certificates. Beginning 1 January 1977, those being separated for misconduct, security reasons or who request discharge for the good of the service would be issued a discharge under “other than honorable” conditions;
- Fleet and force master chiefs gain approval to serve on the E-7 and E-8/9 selection boards (two per board);
- An increasing interest and desire for a distinctive insignia for the enlisted surface warfare community has been evidenced. Force Master Chiefs William M. Keough and Charles Griva, Atlantic and Pacific Surface Force respectively, have been tasked to coordinate a Surface Warfare insignia qualification criteria review within the enlisted force of their respective fleets. A dedicated and coordinated effort is urged so that this can be an agenda item for the October 1977 CNO MCPO conference;
- A problem area in overseas screening. Screening commands are clearing individuals for overseas assignment who have no business being overseas. The result is a waste of PCS monies;
- Command sponsorship programs need shoring up. Too many people never received “word one” from their new commands;
- The Navy is 100 percent on the Joint Uniform Military Pay System (JUMPS) pay system;
- A uniform poll is being conducted to determine the opinion of Navy enlisteds toward the coat-and-tie uniform and the bell-bottom and jumper uniform;

- Boot camp is reduced from nine to eight weeks. The cut will save the Navy about \$20 million each year;

- SECNAV W. Graham Claytor is sworn in;

- During a visit to Great Lakes Naval Training Center, the MCPON talked to a group of newly arrived students. It was easy to pick out the fleet sailors since they were the ones whose uniforms and overall grooming was markedly poorer. He was concerned that fleet sailors will have a significant influence on the other students. Personnel whose attitude and/or personal appearance is poor or marginal should not receive a favorable command recommendation to attend "A" school until they improve;

- Results of the Petty Officer Quality Control Review board: 145,000 first and second class petty officers were reviewed; 1,498 identified as substandard performers, administrative action was recommended, including two administrative separations, 100 reductions in rate and 17 transfers to Fleet Reserve; 1,151 sent warning letters citing substandard performance; 66 referred to the Enlisted Alcohol Review Board; 320 advised to pursue a weight reduction program or be subject to a convenience of the government discharge; 36 referred to BUPERS Human Resource Management Section for failure to comply with Navy policy on equal opportunity;

- Senate Armed Services Committee forwards to the Senate proposed legislation making it illegal for members of the Armed Services to knowingly join or solicit others to join a union which claims to represent service members over terms and conditions of their military service. It also prohibits any person or organization from attempting to bargain or negotiate on behalf of military members concerning terms and conditions of military service, in grievance procedures, and prohibits military members from engaging in strikes or other concerted actions;

- During recent CNO MCPO conference, CNO and Deputy Chief of Naval Personnel (DCNP) addressed attrition in the Navy, asked panel for recommendations to reduce the problem;

- No more than 65 percent of disposable income can be garnished for child support and alimony payments under the Tax Reduction and Simplification Act of 1977;

- Widespread concern over consolidation of officer and CPO messes or CPO and petty officer messes. The Navy supports the concept of separate messes and, at this time, there is no plan to establish consolidated messes Navy-

wide;

- Tentative indications are that a review of the policy for assignment of women in the military will be considered as part of the FY 79 Authorization Bill. Navy women can begin wearing the new maternity uniform on January 1, 1978. The uniform will be optional when regular uniforms no longer fit.

Panel Follow-up

Following up on recommendations from the CNO MCPO Advisory Panel became an important and time-consuming role for the MCPON. In the December 1977 issue of *The Word*, the status of action items from the fall CNO MCPO Advisory Panel included the following:

- MCPO/SCPO/CPO Reclassification: CNP supports. CINCPACFLT and CINCUSNAVEUR briefed and concurs. CINCLANTFLT scheduled for brief. CNO to be briefed on the role and function definitions soon. Chief of Naval Education and Training (CNET) requested to provide training assessment for the POM 80 submission;
- Overweight enlisted personnel: CNP concurs. A box will be utilized on E-5 through E-9 evaluation forms to permit the reporting senior to report each enlisted member's height and weight;
- Enlisted Evaluation System: CNP concurs. MCPON will provide representation to the current review of the evaluation system;



MCPON Robert J. Walker talks with mechanics of Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron Light 30 (HSL-30), Norfolk, Va.

- Enlisted Surface Warfare Insignia: MCPON/MCPOFs will review, during their April 1978 conference, the final Surface Warfare Insignia proposal being developed by OP-03;
- Shipboard Habitability Steering Group: CNP concurs. Recommend habitability steering group be established with representation from MCPON/MCPOF;
- Establishment of BM "A" School: Recommend CNET be tasked to study the requirement for the establishment of BM "A" School.

Final approval and implementation for issues such as the enlisted surface warfare insignia often required extensive study, consideration and approval from the fleet commanders and lower echelons, design submission and selection by the Uniform Board, and other intricacies of the “chop chain.” In the case of the ESWS, a chart in the Uniform Board office shows CNO approval in 1975. It would be three years later before the program was implemented.

“You’ve got to have the philosophy that you don’t give a damn who takes credit for it,” Walker said, “as long as it’s something good and it happens.”

“I pushed for ESWS for professional reasons,” he pointed out. “To get your dolphins in the submarine force you go through one helluva indoctrination into that submarine. The individual who wears those dolphins can be doggone proud of himself because it is really an accomplishment. So I said why don’t we create that same professionalism in the surface force with a very tough program. The Navy is certainly going to benefit because of the increased professionalism by all hands.”

To get the program off the ground, individual commands were allowed to set up their own programs.

“As with everything, you’ve got to be flexible,” Walker explained, “so you can solidify that flexibility later. When it first came out there were guidelines but it was left up to the individual commands to qualify their people. Meanwhile, back in the Bureau, we really started to work on a very definitive set of requirements that the individual would have to meet to get the qualifications.”

Walker has been pleased with the results.

“I can’t help but believe that surface warfare qualifications did anything but enhance the Navy,” he said. “And I believe that if you could examine what went on aboard the *Roberts* and *Stark*, (both damaged extensively in the Persian Gulf), you will find that they were able to save the ships because the majority of the crew was surface warfare qualified.”

Getting sailors adequately paid for going to sea was an issue that Walker fought hard to win, but left office before an increase was approved.

“There was a laughable sea pay,” he said. “I forget how many times I testified on sea pay before committees. A chiefs sea pay was only \$22.50 per month. It was ridiculous. You lost money going from shore duty to sea duty. You’re going back to what the Navy is all about and you take a pay cut. The last time I testified was in ‘79. The next year, they increased it to \$100. Now you can get up to \$500. That’s not shabby.”

Physical Fitness

Physical fitness was another of Walker’s pet peeves. A program called “Shipshape” existed during his tenure. Standards or weight limitations were based on a simple scale of proportionate height and weight. According to Walker,

the weight control program was not uniformly enforced for officers and enlisted.

“What really pissed me off was this doctor in Pearl Harbor, a commander, who was forcing enlisted people out of the Navy for being overweight and that S.O.B. weighed three hundred pounds,” Walker said. “I went to see the CNO about it. I was so incensed that I almost stood in the middle of his desk. He kind of gathered that I was upset. I’ll never forget it. He said, ‘You know, master chief. I think you are really pissed off.’ I said I am because that’s absolutely incomprehensible that we let a three-hundred-pound slob make a decision like that. Well, the slob didn’t remain in his job but it has been very difficult to have a uniform approach. We did solidify to a degree the control of weight of enlisted.”

New Roles and Systems

On May 23, 1978, the CNO approved the new roles and function definitions for master, senior, and chief petty officers. Briefly, the three-tiered definitions set more specific divisions in technically oriented supervisory and management skills. The MCPO was given administration and management functions involving enlisted people and was expected to contribute in matters of policy formulation as well as implementation within their occupational field or across the full Navy rating spectrum.

The senior chief was described as the senior technical supervisor within a rating or occupational field and would provide the command with technical expertise. The chief would become the top technical authority and expert within a rating, providing the direct supervision, instruction, and training of lower rate people.

Another of Walker’s projects was the Board for Correction of Naval Records. ‘What a mess that was!’ he said. “I managed to get the ignoramus in charge fired. It was taking an average at that time of three years or more to have BCNR act on a letter from someone. Now that’s ridiculous!”

Walker’s staff had problems just pulling someone’s record for casework.

“Filing - all they had were paper records,” Walker said. “When the Atlantic Naval Manpower Analysis Center took a look at BCNR, they said, ‘Jeez, we need to put in a computer system’ and everything started to move. They went to microfiche.”

In July 1978, Admiral Holloway was relieved by Admiral Thomas B. Hayward as the CNO. During the next four years, “Pride and Professionalism” became the battle cry in the Navy’s war against drugs and leadership apathy.

At that time, there were three different evaluation forms for chiefs and above, E-5/6s, and E-4 and below.

On July 5, 1978, Walker forwarded the final report of a study of the Enlisted Performance Evaluation System conducted by the FM/Cs, a recommendation from the 1977 CNO MCPO Advisory Panel.

“What we tried to do was eliminate everybody being 4.0,” Walker said. “The group that did that did a helluva job. The CNP, Vice Admiral James Watkins was dumbfounded. He couldn’t believe that the group turned out the work that they did.”

Although the group recommended going to a single form for all rates, it would take five years and another study group before the Navy would eliminate the three-form system.

In September 1978, Walker moved the office to its current location in Room 1046 in the Navy Annex. Previously occupied by the Inspector General, the new location gave the MCPON and his staff a large outer office with a small coffee mess area and a large, separate office for the MCPON.

Farewell

Walker’s farewell message in the September 1979 issue of *The Direct Line* reflects a mood of intense pride in the role he played in the Navy’s progress to solid, communicative leadership. His final comments on leadership characterize his tenure:

“Honesty must be a day-to-day example of genuine concern for people, a professional approach to the mission, and the ability to lead and accomplish set goals. Never be afraid to admit mistakes or try new ideas, and by all means, let your subordinates have the opportunity to recommend and become part of the solution.

“There is no place for bigotry or racism in the Navy. We are all sailors striving to achieve a common goal and that is the continued freedom our great nation enjoys. The most important thing to keep in mind is that the Navy is truly an honorable profession.”

After his retirement on September 28, 1979, Walker worked three years with the Non-Commissioned Officers Association, rising to the position of president. He is presently employed as Manager/Public Relations for the Jonathon Corporation, a ship repair/electronics business in Norfolk, Virginia. His continued involvement in organizations that support the Navy has gained him the reputation as “Mr. Navy” in the Norfolk area.

On September 21, 1990, he was present for the dedication of Robert J. Walker Hall, the new home of Operations Specialist “A” School at Fleet Combat Training Center, Atlantic, Dam Neck, Virginia. The facility has 120,000 square feet, 36 classrooms, 20 laboratories, and 15 offices, making it the largest school at Dam Neck.



MCPON Thomas S. Crow.

Pride and Professionalism:

Master Chief Thomas S. Crow

September 28, 1979 - October 1, 1982

"I will always remember Tom Crow for his great support and his many accomplishments but I will remember him especially: First, for his lovely wife, Carol. Admiral Hayward recognized the importance of family to the sailor and authorized Carol to travel with Tom. This proved to be great initiative. Carol was a wonderful representative, an excellent listener, a very fine speaker, a valuable source of information and a great credit to the Navy. Second, the Navy Senior Enlisted Academy.... Tom Crow believed that having an Academy dedicated to our Senior Enlisted personnel and located in the vicinity of our Naval War College would enhance "Pride and Professionalism" and would be a real boon to senior enlisted leadership. He felt very strongly that the Navy should have its own Academy. Mainly through Tom's personal and forceful drive, the Navy did in 1981 establish its own Senior Enlisted Academy. I was very proud to be there with him to cut the ribbon. Lastly, I will always remember Tom Crow as someone who consistently showed superb leadership by example on a daily basis. He was a strong spokesman for entire enlisted community and he never forgot that he was a sailor from the fleet and that readiness and fleet are what it's all about. He was one great shipmate!"

Vice Admiral Lando W. Zech, USN(Ret.)
Former CNP

Thomas Sherman Crow grew up in McArthur, Ohio, looking forward to the day that he could join the Navy. Raised by his grandmother after his mother died in childbirth, he believed that the Navy was his only opportunity to break out of the poverty he knew as a child.

An uncle who served in the Navy with the Seabees during WW II was Crow's role model. In January, 1953, after graduating from high school, Crow joined the Navy. After boot camp, he began training as an aviation structural mechanic. For the next 21 years, he lived in the world of an aircraft mechanic, switching periodically between types of aircraft, platforms, and environments.

Though advancement to E-6 had come relatively quickly, he hit a stone wall at the E-7 level.

"I was probably one of the Navy's most senior first classes," he said. "Chief just never seemed to open up. It became a real test of will to keep going back to take the test." The wall finally crumbled in 1971 and by 1974, as a senior chief,

Crow was looking for a new challenge. He found it in the new world of race relations.

“We were beginning to have some very serious problems with race relations in the Navy,” he said. “Equal opportunity was an issue. We were having problems dealing with the different races and cultures. I prided myself in being a person who takes people as they are. A good person is a good person and I really don’t care what race or culture they come from. I felt the impact of what I thought were some very racist, sexist kinds of things going on during that time. The Navy was looking for people to work in the area of Human Resources so I volunteered.”

He started training for duty as a race relations education specialist and was chosen to attend the Defense Race Relations Institute, Patrick AFB, Florida. He was assigned to COMNAVMRPAC where he served as a trainer for race relations and a member of the quality control inspection team for overseas WESTPAC units and carriers. After completion of the equal opportunity program specialist training at Cheltenham, Maryland, he became a program manager for AIRPAC, implementing Phase II of the equal opportunity/race relations program aboard carriers in the Pacific.

Meanwhile, Crow was enhancing his own opportunities, as well, by attending National University in San Diego, California, where he graduated in 1976 with an associate’s degree in business administration.

In 1977, he launched into a somewhat different area of counseling -attending the Navy Drug/Alcohol Counselor School at NAS Miramar, California. Upon completion, he moved over to the AIRPAC Human Resource Management Support Office as an assistant and as manager of the EO/RR, Drug and Alcohol Program. After advancing to master chief, he was selected as AIRPAC force master chief in December 1977. He continued his off-duty education, receiving a bachelor’s degree in business administration.

Nominated for MCPON

Two years later, he was nominated by AIRPAC for the job of MCPON. Competition for MCPON Walker’s successor produced six finalists: Master Chief Electrician’s Mate Allen R. Bailey, a human resources management specialist aboard *Lawrence*; Master Chief Boatswain’s Mate Jesse J. Holloway, COMNAVSURFPAC force master chief; Master Chief Boatswain’s Mate George E. Ingram, assistant retention officer for SURFPAC; Master Chief Torpedoman’s Mate Franklin A. Lister, Commander Submarine Force Atlantic force master chief; Master Chief Avionics Technician Billy C. Sanders, NAS Pensacola, Florida, command master chief; and Master Chief Aircraft Maintencenceman Thomas S. Crow.

The candidates met in Washington on the evening of June 24, 1979 to begin

a week of interviews, briefings, tours, luncheons, dinners, and a cruise on the CNO's barge.

On Friday, June 29, CNO Admiral Thomas B. Hayward announced that he had chosen Force Master Chief Crow to be the Navy's fourth MCPON. Three months later, in ceremonies at the Washington Navy Yard, Crow relieved retiring MCPON Walker. Prior to the turnover, Crow attended and participated in the annual CNO Master Chief Petty Officer Advisory Panel. He recalled his introduction to the group only two years before as a force master chief.

"I was intimidated by that group of master chiefs," he said. "That first year, I just shut up and listened. They were the strongest willed, stubbornest bunch of master chiefs. Used to yelling, shouting, arguing and debating. Walker kept us very busy working in groups. It was a big learning experience. I held my own. Paid attention. Next year I spoke up a lot more. We were fighting like hell on issues, but by the end of the week, we'd come to a consensus on issues to go to the CNO with fairly well-thought out recommendations."

In his first meeting with Admiral Hayward, Crow said he was made to feel very comfortable.

"We talked about 'Pride and Professionalism,'" Crow said, "and discussed how we intended to do the job we felt needed to be done. Based on my experiences of force master chief and from watching Bob Walker, I felt that I needed to be out in the fleet. I asked how much access I would have to the CNO and he answered as much as I needed."

MCPON Crow inspects the troops at a commissioning ceremony for USS Oeyo.

In their discussion on leadership, Crow was pleased to discover similar philosophies.

"His idea of leadership was that the CPO mess should be the focal point of the community," he said. "Because of their seniority and experience, he placed lot of weight on the CPO. We both believed that leaders needed to be honest with their people. They needed to be the teachers, trainers, and role models. And they needed to speak up when necessary."

When Crow took over as MCPON, the Navy was having morale problems centered around pay and allowances, the drug culture was at its peak, low retention was still a concern, and the liberal pendulum set in motion during the Zumwalt era was still creating leadership problems and uniform instability. In the face of those problems, Crow came in with one simple goal: he wanted to be able to present a "pure enlisted perspective," to the leadership in Washington.

"I came from out in the fleet and I wanted to continue to see the Navy through that set of eyes," he said. "I was not going to allow the job to turn me into a bureaucrat or a politician who would bring back to the CNO what I thought he wanted to hear. That was really my only intention coming into the office."

In his first issue of *The Direct Line*, Crow addressed a concern that was common throughout the Navy in 1979.

"We have problems in today's Navy," he wrote. "All of us have concerns as

to where the reviews and studies of our pay and retirement will lead. The CNO and the Joint Chiefs of Staff are working for our best interests. As a career professional, I have faith in them to protect our interests.”

Pay Problems

By the late seventies and early eighties, inflation was taking its toll on military paychecks. Families unable to cope with the increased cost of living were turning to food stamps. In the Winter 1980 issue of *Wifeline*, an article was dedicated to the subject of eligibility, application and usage.

“Before you let stigma or your pride interfere,” the article cautioned, “the health and welfare of your family should be uppermost in your mind.”

Efforts to convince Congress to increase military pay revolved around a fair pay and compensation package that would bring military salaries and benefits more in line with the civilian economy.

The Crows had nine children through his-and-her marriages. Together, they were acutely aware of the hardships that Navy families were facing on limited budgets.

“We were pushing ‘Pride and Professionalism’ in the Navy at a time when our families were being forced to take food stamps to eat,” Crow said. “It created a dichotomy. In trying to reach a balance, we had to tell sailors to not allow pride to get in the way...feed your children.”

Wife’s Role

Admiral Hayward was, according to Crow, very family oriented. He recognized the importance of the family unit and the influence it could play on a sailor’s career. He viewed the wife of the MCPON as an essential member of the “Pride and Professionalism” effort, someone who could visit with the families and communicate their concerns to Washington. She could also provide information on exchanges, commissaries, dispensaries, etc. For the first time since the creation of the office, the wife of the MCPON had the blessings and authorization of the CNO to travel with her husband.

Leadership Apathy

Also in his first message to the fleet and force master chiefs via *Direct Line*, Crow addressed the subject of leadership apathy.

“A question I’m continuously asked by fellow Master Chiefs is, What can we do about the apathy within our CPO, SCPO, and MCPO ranks?’ My answer must

always be the same - I cannot do a thing. The attitude is brought about by different things for different people. Frustration, fear, and anger brought about by what we see and hear around us contribute to the emotions, and many times the reaction manifests itself in apathy for some, and enthusiasm for others.”

The negative results of leadership apathy, according to Crow, were translating into poor job satisfaction, poor retention, excess attrition and very weak leadership on the deckplates.

“A very subtle change has overtaken us in the Navy over a period of seven or eight years,” he said. “The situation I speak of is the role of the work center supervisor, CPO versus the division officer, Junior Officer. Everywhere I go I see a young division officer with a desk right in the middle of a work center or shop. Very busy taking over and doing the tasks that once belonged to the CPO.

“This taking over has virtually stripped the CPO of authority and responsibility. Apparently, someone told our junior officers to get more involved, and obviously this has been interpreted as taking over the chief’s role.”

Crow placed the responsibility for correcting the situation squarely on the shoulders of the senior enlisted leadership.

“If any change is to occur,” he pointed out, “it must originate within the group of senior petty officers and chiefs, for it is the senior enlisted personnel who are the backbone of the Navy.”

The CNO supported the MCPON in this campaign. Crow said that in their discussions about the CPO/JO issue, the admiral agreed that “any junior officer who tried to exercise control when a more experienced CPO is running the shop was exercising poor judgment.”

“Most officers who have done well in the Navy have learned from a good chief,” Crow said. “Leadership is founded on mutual respect. Both the junior officer and the chief have to know their place in the chain of command.”

New Roles

Crow immediately began working to implement the newly defined roles for Senior and Master Chiefs.

“This project must proceed slowly and carefully to ensure that the final decisions, especially those changes that impact upon our chain of command,” he wrote in *Direct Line*, “are ones that provide job satisfaction for the personnel it affects and strengthens the organization in such a way as to improve the credibility of both the senior and master chiefs and the junior officers in the Navy.”

Training for senior and master chiefs in those new roles would revolve around the creation of a Senior Enlisted Academy, Crow said.

“I want to caution all of you that the reality of an academy in this plan is just one method being explored and may be the direction settled upon,” he wrote. “I

fully comprehend the feelings from our peers in the fleet and our strong inputs from the fleet/force master chiefs at the last two CNO MCPO Advisory Panels have made it clear that we want and need an Academy for training our senior and master chiefs. I will continue to monitor and participate in this project.”

Master Chief Jon H. Keeney, Commander, Naval Education and Training Force Master Chief, was involved in the research and design phase for the Academy. In his newsletter, he pointed out that the SEA “will not be a boot camp for senior personnel. The atmosphere of this prestigious training is to be one of pride, self-achievement, and a means by which to upgrade managerial skills for further career development.

“We, the senior enlisted personnel, have continually asked to be given the responsibilities commensurate with paygrade and experience and to be held accountable for our actions,” the force master chief wrote. “Future expansion of responsibility for SCPO and MCPO will be determined by how we react and perform to this new challenge.”

On September 14, 1981, Crow attended opening ceremonies for the Senior Enlisted Academy. A pilot class of 16 students would receive nine weeks of education in communication skills, national security affairs, Navy programs, and physical readiness training. Classes were conducted in facilities at the Center for War Gaming, Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island.

Reliable Communication

Throughout his tenure, Crow stayed in close contact with the fleet and force master chiefs, using them as a reliable system of communication. In 1980, he added a fleet master chief billet for Assistant VCNO/Director Naval Administration. The new billet was called Naval Shore (NAVSHORE) and was filled by Master Chief Bob White. Under NAVSHORE were the force master chiefs for CNET, Naval Reserve, Security Group, Recruiting Command, and Bureau of Medicine. With the addition of two new force master chief billets, the organizational chart in 1980 had five fleet master chiefs: CINCPACFLT, CINCLANTFLT, Chief of Naval Material (CHNAVMAT), Commander in Chief, U.S. Naval Forces Europe (CINCUSNAVEUR) and NAVSHORE; 16 force master chiefs and seven CNO-directed command master chiefs.

Crow initiated a Spring Fleet Master Chief Conference to provide fleet master chiefs with an update on the status of personnel issues and to get current information to take back to their sailors. He also pushed for closer coordination between the fleet and force master chiefs and between the fleet and type commanders and their master chiefs.

“I didn’t believe that the fleet and forces needed to flock around the MCPON too much,” he said. “They needed to be out with their commanders and their senior enlisted leadership, gathering information and recommendations that they

could consolidate as input for the advisory panels.”

He also placed increase focus on the role of the command master chief (C M/C), guiding the creation of a new charter that expanded the responsibilities associated with the title. OPNAVINST 5400.37B reflected additional authorized CMC billets for ships, squadrons, and stations with more than 250 personnel assigned and described the newly authorized rating badge for C M/Cs. The revision resulted in the assignment of a command master chief detailee.

Better Pay

In the January, 1980 issue of *Direct Line*, the MCPON announced the findings of the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) Special Pay Study on Military Compensation. Among the recommendations were: an increase in military basic pay; the enactment of a variable housing allowance which would pay the difference between a service member's BAQ and the average rental costs plus utilities at the location of the member's duty station; a complete restructuring of travel allowances associated with PCS entitlements, and an increase in sea pay. Enactment of the recommendations required both Presidential and Congressional approval.

Travel Schedule

MCPON Crow's travel schedule for his first year in office was an ambitious one. In January, he visited bases in Key West, Jacksonville, Mayport, and Pensacola, Florida; in February, he was in Corpus Christi, Texas, and Puerto Rico, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and Bermuda; in March he was back to Texas for visits to NAS Beeville and NAS Kingsville; in April, he took a WESTPAC swing through Hawaii, Midway, Guam, Okinawa, Philippines, Japan, Australia and Adak; in May, he was in Memphis, Tennessee, Great Lakes, Illinois, and Brunswick, Maine, Newport, Rhode Island, and New London, Connecticut; in June, he was in Argentia, Newfoundland, Keflavik, Iceland, and on a European swing through Holy Loch, Edzell, Scotland; Thurso, Brawdy, Wales; Naples, Gaeta, Italy; La Maddalena, Sardinia; Nea Maakri, Greece; Sigonella, Sicily; Rota, Spain; and Augsburg, Germany; in August and September, he was on the West Coast visiting San Diego area bases, Long Beach, Pt. Mugu, China Lake, California; Fallon, Nevada; NAS Whidbey Island, Seattle, and Bremerton, Washington; and San Francisco and Alameda, California.

During his travels, Crow began noticing “a strong desire and some commendable effort by many of our senior petty officers, chief petty officers and officers to put our leadership back on course.”

He also noted “side effects” from “the vicious circle of people working

longer and harder to accomplish the jobs necessary to meet ever increasing commitments.”

“As the retention of our mid-career people declines,” he wrote in *Direct Line*, “the hours and work load per person increases. This vicious circle has created many side effects that have affected morale and training of those who need it most.”

He urged the more experienced senior petty officers to provide encouragement and support to the younger sailors.

“Keeping a positive attitude in the face of an apparent lack of concern on the part of our leaders in Congress and the American public for our ability to survive in an economy that has gone crazy is difficult,” he wrote. “It puts those of us who love the Navy and who truly care about our future to the test of dedication and loyalty.”

In March 1980, Crow served as the principal speaker at the commissioning of the destroyer *Deyo* in Pascagoula, Mississippi. His speech centered on the state of the Navy in terms of ships, weapons, and force levels. He closed his address paying tribute to the “520,000 individuals who are currently giving a part of their lives to the Navy.”

“Although today’s Navy has had its share of quantitative and qualitative shortfalls,” he said, “I continue to receive reports praising the high caliber of professionalism and dedication on the part of our men and women.”

Drug Abuse

Drug abuse gained even more attention in 1980. A DOD survey, answered anonymously by service personnel, revealed that 47 percent of Navy and Marine Corps E-1 to E-5 population had used marijuana at some time in the previous 30 days prior to completing the questionnaire. Twenty-six percent of junior enlisted reported in the survey that they had been under the influence of drugs while at work and nearly one-half reported using drugs on 40 or more occasions in the previous year. The survey also showed that the percentage of heavy drinkers five or more drinks on one occasion at least once a week - was 25.6 percent.

In 1981, results of autopsies on 14 sailors killed in the crash of an EA-6B Prowler on the deck of Nimitz revealed that six of the flight deck crew had traces of marijuana in their blood.

In July 1981, the CNO declared a “War on Drugs” with a “Zero Tolerance” for use of illegal drugs. Urinalysis testing began with new recruits at point of entry within 48 hours of arrival at boot camp and again immediately upon arrival at first training school.

“Senior enlisted leadership, including the fleet and force master chiefs, were way out in front in the battle,” Crow said. “They were adamantly against it. The majority of them felt that if you ‘do drugs, you’re out’ with no rehabilitation. We

felt that there was enough good people in the Navy who didn't do drugs but we had to temper our stand. Because of the extent of the problem, you couldn't kick everybody out."

At the outset of the urinalysis program, Naval hospitals were overwhelmed by the volume of specimens arriving daily for testing.

"It was a big fiasco," Crow said. "We finally developed a viable effective urinalysis program that you could trust. If it came back positive, you knew it wasn't because they had been eating poppy seed buns at McDonalds."

In The Direct Line, Crow encouraged chiefs, senior chiefs, and master chiefs to become knowledgeable about the drug abuse problem.

"We must become more aware of the symptoms of drug use and how it exhibits itself in the people who abuse it," he wrote. "No one is immune to it and we have seen involvement in the drug scene at every level of our organization, young people, junior and senior petty officers, chiefs and officers.

"I believe it is safe to say that today you, as chiefs, senior chiefs, and master chiefs must either be part of the problem or part of the solution. The middle ground no longer exists to hide behind or excuse the lack of involvement that put us where we find ourselves today."

Using the Vote

Getting sailors interested in the legislative process and encouraging them to vote became a critical issue for the MCPON and Mrs. Crow during their visits with sailors and their families. They were joined in this effort by fraternal organizations such as FRA, NCOA, Navy Wives Clubs, and others.

"We tried to create an awareness of the voting records of Congressmen so they could see who were their real friends in Congress and who they could blame for the lack of pay and compensation," Crow said.

According to Mrs. Crow, many of the wives "had no clue as to where pay came from or the voting process."

"I told them if we want change, we've got to vote," she said.

"We were pushing for Congress to establish a fair wage for the military," Crow said. "Garbage workers were making more than trained technicians in the Navy. There is no way you can pay someone adequately for the sacrifices military service requires or for the willingness to go in harm's way for your country. But it was a very sad time in those days. Some of our Navy families were on welfare."

Habitability

Habitability became another concern of Crow's. As a force master chief, he had served as an enlisted representative on the Shipboard Habitability Steering

Committee.

“We were fighting a bitter battle with the operational mentality of our ship designers and planners,” he said. “Minimal attention was given to bunk space in new construction. They were more concerned about air conditioning for computer spaces, and weapons systems. We were able as a group to raise consciousness in the design of berthing compartments.”

Providing better living conditions for the crews of ships undergoing overhaul in shipyards was an even greater problem.

“Berthing barges in shipyards were always a problem,” he said. “They were set up in an industrial factory. In earlier days, no consideration was given to what happened to a crew when their ship went to the yards. Noise levels were high, especially when a machine shop was put on one end of the barge and berthing on the other. We got that stopped but it never got to what I would call satisfactory.”

Carriers coming into overhaul presented an even larger challenge for berthing facilities. In the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Bremerton, Washington, adequate berthing for carrier crews was nonexistent. The steering committee was able to convince the Navy to bring out a mothballed Military Sea Transport Service ocean liner for use as living area for carrier sailors.

“We brought it up near the yard and parked it,” Crow said. “It wasn’t easy to get approval because it had never been done before. Everyone was looking for negatives, why we couldn’t do it. Finally, we overcame simply because there were no alternatives.”

In his visits to shore facilities, he discovered that habitability problems weren’t limited to ships.

“I can honestly state that I have seen and lived in quarters during my travels that range from Skid Row to the Hilton,” he wrote in *The Direct Line*. “Some of our bases have accomplished improvements far beyond minimum requirements. We still have many bases, however, that operate on the premise that a bunk, locker, and perhaps a slightly used, but hard, chair is all our bachelor sailors need. Beyond that, not much is provided to make the BEQ home.”

Crow pointed out that upgrading the quality of life for sailors may be a matter of “where there’s a will, there seems to be a way.”

“I understand the shortage of funds that exist, but I have seen what can be done with available funding when the people in charge are creative and have a sincere concern for making living quarters more comfortable and attractive.”

He noted that a recent conference had been held in San Diego to examine quality of life issues in AIRPAC.

“Representatives from commands Navy-wide participated,” he said, “and I hope their work will become visible in the quality of life and habitability of our ships and stations in the near future.”

Encouraging Signs

By the middle of his second year, Crow was seeing encouraging signs that “Pride and Professionalism” was taking root. During a trip to the West Coast, he visited ten ships, among them the *Alamo*, *St. Louis*, *William H. Standley*, and *Merrill*.

“These ships stand out in my memory as squared away, clean, and sharp,

**Senior Enlisted Heads of the Armed Forces (l-r) are: Sergeant Major Connelly, USA
Sergeant Major Crawford, USMC; MCPON Crow Chief Master Sergeant McCoy,**



USAF; and MCPOCG Stevens, USCG.

with crews of sailors led by COs who have instilled pride in their ships and self esteem in their people,” he wrote proudly in *The Direct Line*. “Pride and Professionalism’ standards of quality that are enforced and supported do promote good morale and positive attitudes. The most rewarding element of the whole process is that it doesn’t require harassment or chicken s--t actions to make it happen.”

Crow was optimistic for other reasons midway through his tenure. A new administration and new faces in Congress heralded positive changes in pay and compensation.

“The other shoe is about to drop,” he wrote, “and within the next two months, we will see either a July pay raise or a substantial catch-up pay increase in October along with the cost of living allowance and several other benefits.”

Crow began using “hi-words” in his travels around the fleet. Along with “Pride and Professionalism,” he encouraged people to follow their conscience because it was “The Right Thing To Do.” To make the drug abuse policy clear and concise, he used, “Not on my watch, not on my ship, not in my Navy,” and “Just say no to drugs.”

Operations Specialist Third Class Boyd S. Tveit, attached to *Samuel Eliot Morison* designed a poster to give the Navy’s drug program an image. It was a stem of marijuana encircled and crossed by the symbol universally used for “no.” By June 1982, Crow could report “tremendous progress and improvement across the board” in military appearance, attitudes, morale, and a feeling of well-being around the fleet.

Uniforms

Uniforms replaced pay as the most frequently heard complaints.

“It would take a book to list or recount all the gripes and complaints I have heard in my travels during the past two years,” he wrote in *The Direct Line*. “We have attained a point now that is vitally important for you to participate in putting the problems behind us and concentrate on educating your sailors on the requirements they must function with now.”

He asked for support in working with the Navy Resale and Support System, Navy Supply System and the Navy Uniform Shop managers in reaching a point of stability and common sense in uniform matters.

“Unfortunately, a great deal of the griping and complaining has come from our more senior people and much of it from chiefs,” he wrote. “Some examples are the new service dress whites (choker), the white hat, and the decision to allow the command ball caps in working areas only, the introduction of summer khaki, and the phasing-in of the bell bottom and jumper uniforms for E-6 and below. These decisions are made and are here to stay.”

A sampling from the 1981 Uniform Regulations shows the following changes: jumper uniform package prescribed (required) for all E-1 to E-5 men who entered the Navy on or after May 1, 1980, optional to all other E-1 to E-5 men until May 1, 1983, at which time jumper style uniforms will be required. Jumper style uniforms also optional for E-6 men; dungarees/utility uniforms are interchangeable at the option of the individual. Men’s dungarees become mandatory July 1, 1982; only flame retardant clothing will be worn when engaged in hot work such as welding or brazing, when exposed to open flame, such as during boiler light-off operations or spark producing work such as grinding; summer khaki uniform reintroduced for officers and CPOs; safety

shoes required for enlisted men, E-6 and below; maternity dungaree uniform authorized for E-6 and below.

Support for Families

Navy family service centers really began to come into their own during Crow's tour. The impetus for the program was the Navy Family Awareness Conference held in Norfolk, Virginia, in November 1978.

At the conference, attended by more than 700, Admiral Hayward stressed the Navy's total commitment to taking care of needs of Navy families because "it is the right thing to do."

"The Navy gives insufficient attention to family needs and programs and policies to support families are inadequate and fragmented," the conference concluded. As a result, the Navy established its Family Support Program through a flag level steering group in 1979 and began funding its network of family service centers.

In July 1979, the doors of the pilot family services center in Norfolk officially opened, heralding a new era for the Navy family. At the center, Navy members or family members could tap into an around-the clock information and referral service, short-term counseling on walk-in basis, and seminars on military rights and benefits, consumer education, financial planning, and other topics.

In San Diego, California, five Navy Assistance Centers focused primarily on improving the coordination and use of both Navy and civilian resources and services in the area.

By 1981, four additional family service centers opened in areas with large Navy population. Dr. Ann O'Keefe, former director of both the Home Start Program and the Child and Family Resource Program of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, took over as director of the Family Program Branch of the Human Resource Management Division in 1979. Her staff of seven Navy military members and two civilian professionals in child and family development provided policy, technical guidance, and evaluation to the family service centers.

MCPON and Mrs. Crow worked closely with Dr. O'Keefe, providing her with input they received from sailors and their families.

"We made it a point to monitor the program's growth wherever we visited," Crow said. "With the emphasis on family support and the creation of family service centers, command master chiefs had a wide array of services available to them to help their sailors and their families. In the past, the only resource was to send them to the chaplain."

Command ombudsmen became the bridge between a command and the family service centers.

"Together the command master chief and the ombudsman work to keep the

commanding officer informed,” he said. “A command works best when the commanding officer, executive officer, ombudsman, and command master chief work hand in glove.”

Changing of the Watch

In June 1982, Admiral Hayward was relieved by Admiral James D. Watkins as the CNO.

In the November 1982 issue of *The Direct Line*, Crow said goodbye. He expressed satisfaction that “our good chiefs are taking the aggressive role of bringing the others on board with us so that our chief’s community can once again be respected for its vital role in the chain of command and for our inherited ability and ingenuity of taking care of problems at the lowest level,” he wrote.

Much of the “fear, frustration and anger” that he found in the Navy was gone by the time he turned over the office. Junior officers had become more sensitive and aware of the role of chiefs in the command and a mutual respect was beginning to take hold.

Navy families were receiving support through individual commands and family service centers; ombudsmen were considered essential links in a well-functioning command; and for the first time, the Navy had an official policy on child care operations. Navy paychecks were based on a “fairer” wage scale, relieving the financial burden for many of the families.

Drug abuse in the Navy was decreasing and sailors were taking more pride in their jobs, their uniforms and their physical appearance.

“As I leave the Navy to enter into a new career, I look back with a positive feeling about our Navy today,” he wrote. “It is not now and probably never will be without problems. I have enjoyed the unique opportunity of participating in a revitalization of many traditional things that had served us well in the past, had been pushed away for a period of years and then brought back alive to serve us well again.”

After retirement, Crow returned to National University in San Diego as the associate director for career development. Within a year, he had completed his master’s degree and accepted a position with General Dynamics Convair in Human Resources in management education and training. Today, he is the chief of management development and motivational training for General Dynamics Convair.



MCPON Billy C. Sanders.

Doing the Right Thing:

Master Chief Billy C. Sanders

October 1, 1982 - October 4, 1985

“I am very pleased and proud to comment on the MCPON with whom I served while Chief of Naval Personnel from 1983-1986, MCPON Billy Sanders. ...The many layers in the Chain of Command leading to my position seemed to be able to filter and distort much important information. I was extremely fortunate to have Billy Sanders as MCPON during my entire time as Chief of Naval Personnel. His sincerity, honesty, intelligence, and common sense made him immensely valuable to the senior leadership of the Navy. We were dealing with so many difficult challenges in those years, such as developing effective solutions to our drug and alcohol problems in the Navy. Bill’s insights were extremely helpful in our decision-making process. The exemplary dedication which he and his lovely wife, Mozelle, brought to their responsibilities was truly inspirational.”

Vice Admiral William P. Lawrence, USN(Ret.)
Former CNP

Billy Sanders went in the Air Force out of high school in 1954. A friend joined the Navy at the same time. Three years later, he and his friend went home with their discharge papers to Montgomery, Alabama. His friend was an E-6, he was an E-4.

In 1958, after picking up a few college credits, Sanders decided to go back in the service. This time, he joined the Navy. Six months after his four-year anniversary as a sailor, he sewed on an aviation electronics technician first class crow. Six years later, he was a chief, three years later a senior chief, and three years after that he was a Master Chief Avionics Technician. “Joining the Navy was the best decision I ever made,” Sanders said.

Throughout his career, Sanders made good, solid leadership and career decisions, based on common sense and what he felt was right. In June 1979, 21 years after joining the Navy, he was serving as command master chief for NAS Pensacola and Training Air Wing Six. In Washington, CNO Admiral Thomas B. Hayward announced the names of six finalists in the competition for a relief for MCPON Bob Walker. Among the six were two aviation master chiefs, AFCM Thomas S. Crow and AVCM Billy C. Sanders. The nod went to Crow and a year

later Sanders took over as command master chief at Naval Air Facility Lajes, Azores.

Shortly before his tour ended at Lajes, Sanders hosted a visit from the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy. Crow was nearing the end of his tenure and nominations were already coming in for his relief. He took Sanders aside and recommended that he put in for his job. Sanders told him that he had already been through that once before and did not see any point in doing it again. But the commanding officer at Lajes submitted a nomination package for Sanders anyway. Meanwhile, Sanders was transferred to the Naval Education and Training Program Development Center at Pensacola, Florida, in February 1982 to serve as the Special Projects Division Officer.

By July, the E-8/9 selection board had whittled the nomination packages down to 35. The special board chose four finalists: MMCM(SS) Norman "Shorty" D. Garoutte, SUBLANT Force Master Chief; NCCM Courtland R. Johnson, Command Master Chief, Commander Patrol Wings Pacific; HMCM(SS) William J. O'Daniell, staff, CINCPACFLT Headquarters; and AVCM Billy Sanders, Chief of Naval Education and Training Program Development Center, Pensacola.

Sanders and his wife, Mozelle, made their second trip to Washington for a week of interviews, briefings, and tours. At the end of the week, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral James D. Watkins announced that he had chosen Master Chief Billy Sanders as the next Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy.

In making the announcement, the CNO described the candidates as "the best the Navy has to offer," and said that his decision was a "very difficult one." He also noted the increasingly responsible position of senior petty officers in the Navy, citing the newly instituted chief petty officer indoctrination course, the Senior Enlisted Academy and the new third class petty officer indoctrination as examples.

"We are seeing the final moves toward cementing the chiefs hat to its rightful place on the Navy leadership pedestal," the CNO said.

Much Work to be Done

Sanders agreed with the CNO that the Navy was on better footing than it had been in a long time, but he also knew there was still much work to be done.

"I stepped in at a good time," he said. "Admiral Hayward and the people who worked for him, including MCPON Crow, had brought back the Navy to a point where there was pride in serving in the Navy. We were still having problems in the area of discipline and leadership. In my mind, we had just let that get out of hand in previous years. It's difficult to change something in a short period of time."

Sanders reported to Washington a month before Crow's retirement

ceremony. Together, they travelled to a few bases and Sanders sat on the sidelines, watching and learning from Crow as he talked to sailors and their leaders. In Washington, Crow took Sanders with him on his rounds in the Pentagon or in the Naval Military Personnel Command (NMPC), formerly BUPERS.

During the week prior to the change of office and retirement ceremony, the CNO MCPO Advisory Panel came to town. Sanders remembers his first impression of the panel: “There were so many master chiefs in this one room and all of them trying to get their say in, I was a little bit taken aback. It was my job to chair the conference because MCPON Crow was leaving. I did the best I could with it. I wasn’t really pleased.”

When he took over as MCPON, he went to the CNO with a recommendation: the panel was too large, the number of fleet and force master chiefs needed to be reduced. The CNO told him that, politically, he could not do that.

“He told me that he couldn’t go to Admiral “X” and tell him that he no longer has a fleet or force master chief,” Sanders said. “I told him that I understood that but one thing we could do was reduce the number coming in for the panel. He agreed and asked for a recommendation. I looked at the structure and saw that there was a lot of overlapping. I selected the ones that could give the CNO a better overall picture and still cover the Navy. When I submitted my recommendation, he bought off on it. In my mind, we had a solid group, fewer people, same inputs but better stated.”

Sanders quickly learned that the CNO had many more things on his mind than working with the MCPON.

“I had been in the job for about a week and I had not heard from the CNO, except for the initial office call, nor from the CNP,” he said. “I was going to work reading up on the issues from the staffing papers in the office and waiting on orders. I asked myself, Well, what am I supposed to do? I’m sitting here having a good time reading but who is going to tell me what to do?” Well, I soon found out that no one was going to tell me what to do. In all my time in the job, I really never had specific orders on what to do. I soon found I could do what I wanted to. I could go where I wanted to go. I could tackle whatever issue I thought was worth tackling. I could sit there in the office for three years and maybe no one would call for me. So, you get busy, you get around to the offices, with the CNP, you propose things that you think you should do, places you should go visit, issues you should talk to. I was never told no.”

Selecting a Staff

One of his first tasks was to select a staff. He inherited Crow’s staff but they were all under orders and would soon be gone.

“Inheriting someone else’s staff is not the best thing,” he points out.” When

you go in, you're fresh and these people have been working the issues for some time and they are attuned to doing things in a certain way. You're the new kid on the block. There could be some conflict so I started looking for a replacement for an executive assistant immediately."

Several people recommended YNCM Tim Brady for the job. Sanders called up his record, along with a few others, and found Brady's record "superb." Brady was working in Unaccompanied Bachelor Housing and Military Housing Policy, OP-153, located in the Navy Annex. Sanders went to see him.

"I was busy working when I turned around and saw the MCPON standing in my work space," Brady recalls. "I had always held the MCPON in great esteem, had heard of the MCPON's reputation. When he asked me if I would be interested in the job as his executive assistant, I said, 'Let me think about that...yes!'"

"Tim was probably my best decision the entire time I was in the Navy," Sanders said. "Bringing him onboard, his expertise in the Navy, in the administrative field, personnel field, and housing. I just couldn't have selected a better person."

The only member of Crow's staff that Sanders kept was JO1 Don Phelps. YN3 Margarita Santana became the other member of the staff.

Making His Rounds

As he made his rounds through the different offices in NMPC, Sanders found there was "still a lot of apprehension in some of the offices" that his job was to "put them on report."

"I made it clear to them from the beginning that I used the chain of command," he said, "that I wasn't going to go over their heads with an issue unless they couldn't or wouldn't assist me in the matter. I think after about a year I was well received, they saw that I did what I said I was going to do."

Sanders and Vice Admiral Lando Zech, Chief of Naval Personnel, developed a good working relationship.

"He was in his last year when I came on board. I felt that he was totally supportive of my role. I could go see him at any time and he would make time on his schedule to see me. I certainly received good advice from him on how to do my job, where to take certain problems. I felt he started me off in the right direction," he said.

Basic Common Sense

In his first year, Sanders began addressing the two issues he came into office hoping to improve: senior enlisted leadership and the Navy's voting record.

His own brand of leadership revolved around “basic common sense.”

“I tried to address each and every issue in a common sense manner,” he said. “Certainly if you are well informed you are better prepared to apply more common sense to any situation. I always felt that I was a master chief in the U.S. Navy, no more than that. I believe in a strong chain of command, with a clear division between the enlisted and officer communities. My energies were directed towards representing the enlisted.”

When he first came on board, he became aware of a growing perception “that the Master Chief of the Navy had a chain of command, a separate chain.”

“I tried to lay that aside,” he said. “I’m the senior enlisted...I don’t have a chain of command as MCPON other than the one everyone else has. I worked for the CNO and no one worked for me, no one. I was the eyes and ears for the CNO and the fleet, force and command master chiefs certainly could advise me and give me a clear picture of what was happening in their particular area. I could pass information to them, not to subvert the chain of command but by passing it directly to them, we could get it moving before the official word came down. We would be ready to act on it. My goal was to get the senior enlisted leadership back on board, taking care of people and getting in tune with what was happening in the Navy today.”

He encouraged leaders to care about their people, to lead and prepare them for a future Navy when sailors would be “smarter, more professional and leaders of the highest quality.”

While Sanders was comfortable that the credibility of the office had been well established by his predecessors, he knew that he would have to build his own credibility with the senior enlisted leadership.

“Senior enlisted will listen to what you say, they also will judge you and pass judgment quickly,” he said. “They will either accept or reject you. While some may have a different opinion, I felt that I was accepted. Only time will prove that.”

Positive Signal

Sanders was pleased with the Navy’s return to the jumper and bell bottom trousers. To him, it sent a positive signal that the Navy was recovering from the wild pendulum swing of the Zumwalt era.

“Admiral Zumwalt did a lot of good things,” he said. “I believe because of him, the Navy turned a corner from operating solely as efficient workers to a Navy of work being done by people. We had to start understanding people issues if we were going to retain good sailors in the service. I believe most of his initiatives were right on target.”

But like many of his peers, Sanders believed that the speed of the changes “caused a lot of disturbance.”

“We went from a traditional Navy to a radically new Navy and we weren’t prepared for that,” he said.

He cited “imagery” as the primary victim in the change from bells to the coat and tie uniform.

“People recognize the sailor because he - and I’m saying ‘he’ because at the time the Navy was comprised mostly of men - was identified with the ‘crackerjacks,’” he points out. “Some may not like to call them that but it was always crackerjacks to me. While the other uniform was a nice coat and tie, it wasn’t the one recognized worldwide as “Navy.” When Admiral Hayward brought back the traditional uniform, pride and professionalism seemed to be centered around that.”

In October 1982, just as Sanders was taking over from Crow, service dress blue and service dress white jumpers became mandatory for E-1 to E-5 men. Effective April 1, 1983, summer blues were deleted for all Navy personnel. On October 1, 1983, service dress blue coat and tie style uniform was no longer authorized for E-6 and below.

“There will be no major uniform changes in the immediate future for the Navy,” Sanders told a group of E-6s and below in Yokosuka, Japan, during his WESTPAC swing in 1983. According to an article in *The Seahawk*, the newspaper at U.S. Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Sanders told the group that the CNO had made it a major priority to work for uniform stability.

“The CNO has been around the Navy for a long time and is just as sick of all the uniform changes as you are,” he said.

Grooming standards also tightened. In the 1984 Uniform Regulations, beards were no longer authorized for “persons in high visibility positions of leadership such as COs, XO’s, C M/Cs, etc.” Sanders was glad to see them go.

“Each time that I would come back from a trip,” he said, “I would report to the CNO that there were a lot of senior people out there who thought beards should be terminated. Admiral Watkins finally made that decision. He didn’t make it lightly. He studied it for some time, calling in all of his flags with warfare departments to get their opinion. When he made the decision, it caused some upheaval but it was short lived. It didn’t cause as much turmoil as we thought it would. We went into it gradually with just the high visibility positions. Then the decision was made to apply the policy throughout the Navy.”

Beards were prohibited for everyone in the Navy after January 1, 1985. Exceptions were allowed for health reasons (i.e., pseudo-folliculitis barbae) when authorized by a commander/commanding officer on the advice of a medical officer.

“P&P”

In the January 1984 issue of *The Direct Line*, Sanders analyzed the early

phases and effect of 'Pride and Professionalism' and the direction it would take in the future.

"P&P I," Sanders explained, brought a "return to our traditional uniforms," and "P&P II" brought "Not in my Navy," and "Because it is the right thing to do."

"Often I'm asked, 'Do we need P&P III?'" " Sanders wrote. "The CNO Master Chief Petty Officer Advisory Panel received this challenge from Admiral Watkins when we met last November.

"Our report to CNO stated that we did not recommend a P&P III - we have on board at this time enough tools (i.e., rules, regulations, instructions) to get the job done. Unfortunately, there are those that fail to use them; either through nonuse, selective enforcement, or ignorance."

Sanders stressed the importance of conducting and practicing "realistic and meaningful military training ranging from General Quarters drills to teaching the proper way to salute."

Physical fitness came into its own during Sanders' term of office. In 1981, the health and physical readiness program was directed by DOD Directive 1308.1. Stamina, cardio-respiratory endurance, strength, flexibility and body



MCPON Sanders effected the "Pride and Professionalism" motto and the direction it would take in the future. Here MCPON-5 discusses issues and concerns with sailors from Rota, Spain. P.

composition was evaluated and tested. In 1982, SECNAV Instruction 6100.1 and OPNAV Instruction 6110.1 were implemented making annual physical readiness testing (PRT) mandatory. Guidelines were set for body composition assessment.

In his February 1984 issue of *The Direct Line*, Sanders addressed the "Fitness for Life" program, providing insight to a forthcoming revised version of OPNAVINST 6110.1 and the problems incurred in the implementation of the new program.

"As with any new system or program," he wrote, "problem areas are going to surface upon implementation." It was determined that some revisions were needed. One element of the program that caused concern was the percent body fat standards and how the percentage was obtained.

"Some members, particularly in the more senior levels, could not fathom how they could be within standards on the OLD height/weight chart but out of standard using the body fat percentage."

He went on to explain how the revised instruction would help to determine a more accurate figure in body fat.

"A modified procedure for estimating body fat percentage has been included in the revision," he said. "For men, the procedure includes neck and waist measurements which are compared to a height chart. For women, measurements are taken at the neck, hips and 'natural waist.' These measurements are then compared to height chart for women to determine the body fat percentage. Keep in mind that all body fat percentages are estimates to be used as a baseline."

He concluded by encouraging commands to "support and encourage members who need assistance in achieving health goals."

"Exercise time, good nutritional food choices, and non-smoking areas should be provided," he wrote. "The bottom line is the self-responsibility each of us has to ensure that we do not succumb to the insidious effects of sedentary jobs, lax attitudes, and neglect of preventive maintenance procedures for ourselves. This program will help our great Navy prevail in the face of adversity and enhance the overall professional and personal quality of life of every member."

GI Bill

Military educational assistance became a major concern of sailors in the early 1980s. With the expiration of the Vietnam GI Bill, Congress began looking for new ways to extend educational assistance to everyone in the military.

"Much interest is being generated by a bill introduced by Congressman G.V. 'Sonny' Montgomery of Mississippi," Sanders wrote in the March/April 1984 issue of *The Direct Line*. "The bill, H.R. 1400 will establish a new educational assistance program to help recruit and retain quality military personnel in all branches of the Armed Services, To a lesser degree and in keeping with previous GI bill programs, the bill would assist veterans in readjusting to civilian life

following their military service.”

The bill, if passed, would provide for a basic benefit of \$300 a month with a maximum of 36 months of entitlement for military personnel who serve three years on active duty, or two years on active duty and four years in the Selected Reserve. (A non-refundable \$100 month reduction in pay for the first 12 months of enrollment would be required from non-prior service personnel.) Eligible individuals must be high school graduates or have received a high school equivalency certificate by the completion of the qualifying period of service. Use of benefits while in-service could begin after two years of active duty. The bill passed and became Public Law 98-525 on October 19, 1984. Although revisions have been made to expand eligibility and to adjust the participation fees, the bill has survived the test of time and today enjoys a participation rate of 80 percent among new recruits.

Voter Apathy

Issues such as the GI Bill and pay increases gave fuel to the fire that Sanders was trying to build under sailors to motivate them to vote. During a visit to his former command in Pensacola, Florida, the MCPON hit hard at voter apathy in a meeting with chief petty officers. *The Gosport*, NAS Pensacola’s newspaper, ran a front page article in its June 17, 1983 issue about his visit.

“Voter apathy, according to Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Billy Sanders, is the number one reason why military personnel lose some traditional benefits and fail to obtain others,” the article began.

“The Navy’s top enlisted man said his research into Navy voting habits revealed that during the last elections only 20 percent of Navy people voted.”

The article quoted Sanders, “We are our own worst enemy. We cry and moan about not getting a pay raise or other benefits, but yet we are willing to let the civilian community pick our leaders for us. I’m here to tell you that there are a number of anti-military elected officials in Washington and, unless we are willing to take a few minutes and fill out that absentee ballot or go to the local polls and cast our vote, we will continue to fall short on the benefit scale.”

Sanders told the chiefs that those who failed to vote or failed to encourage their troops to vote were “being negligent in their duties,” according to the article.

Sanders also encouraged sailors to write to their Congressmen.



Both Admiral D. Watkins and Mrs. Mozelle Sanders shared the joy of MCPON-selectee Billy Sanders on July 16, 1982. CNO Admiral Watkins commented that his decision was a difficult one, yet he believed MCPON Sanders was the right man to meet the Navy's increasingly challenging issues.

"Most people forget that the CNO has a chain of command that is a civilian one. He answers to the Secretaries of the Navy and Defense and the President of the United States," he told a group of sailors in Yokosuka, Japan. "You can bet that a Congressman would pay more attention to a letter from a constituent in his own district who has the power to vote him out of office than someone testifying in front of the Congress as a body."

"Another good reason to write to Congress," he commented, "was that it gives representatives a feel for Navy life."

"Two-thirds of the current Congress has had no military affiliation whatsoever," he said. "They don't know what you do or about your work day. Anytime you write Congress, it keeps them that much better informed."

In his last year in office, Sanders said he could see the tide beginning to turn.

“There were a couple of Senate races and some in the House during my last year that were won through the absentee ballot,” he said. “I felt we were on the right track, but it was one of those things that you can never give up on or you’ll slide backwards very quickly. I think it should be part of our strategy to let the youngsters know how important it is to vote. Not tell them how to vote but tell them how important it is and certainly push to get them registered.”

In Congress

Sanders, who privately admitted that he was “fairly senior” before he voted for the first time, wasn’t sure how effective he was during his testimonies before Congressional committees.

“I went with my counterparts from the other services and we testified mainly on pay, morale, housing,” he said. “It was my job to represent the enlisted force, not to give them the party line but to give them the sailors’ opinion. It’s hard to tell whether we made a difference or not. I think the staffers to the Congressmen are the ones that really influence them.”

But according to his assistant, Master Chief Brady, Sanders was very well liked by the Congressmen with whom he had contact.

“He came across with the believability of an Abe Lincoln,” Brady said during a recent interview. “They considered him to be an honorable, moral and ethical individual.”

One of the issues that Sanders and his counterparts took to the Hill was the need for a dependent dental care program. A trip report submitted on December 29, 1983 following the MCPON’s trip to New London, Connecticut, Newport, Rhode Island, Brunswick, Maryland, and Keflavick, Iceland, lists a dependent care program as a primary concern of the sailors he had visited.

“During most of my question and answer periods, the issue of dental care for dependents surfaced,” he reported. “This is now a real problem for our sailors with dependents, especially junior enlisted. I have become aware of several legislative efforts concerning this problem. I do not believe relief in a



MCPON Sanders brand of leadership, on and off camera, revolved around “basic common sense.”

form similar to medical care is in sight for dependent personnel. Perhaps it is time to investigate the possibility of some form of a DOD contributory program.”

On August 1987, a preventive dental program for spouses and children of active duty members was offered through Delta Dental. The program is managed by the DOD through the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services (CHAMPUS).

Return to Tradition

Like his predecessors, Sanders never missed a chance to stress the importance of senior leadership when he visited a command. At Pensacola, he told the chiefs that the CNO was pushing for a return to the CPO's traditional

role in training junior personnel.

“That doesn’t mean just junior enlisted,” he said. “The CNO mandate to return CPOs to their traditional role includes training of junior officers. After all, what is a junior officer except a better educated airman, seaman, or fireman! When a junior officer walks into your work center, he has no more expertise than that E-3. It’s the job of the chief to train him so that he or she can become a good division officer.”

While Sanders was generally pleased with the direction the Navy was taking during his three years, he was troubled by a “force out” program similar to high year tenure and accelerated promotions in certain critical ratings.

“We had a ‘force out’ for people who could not advance,” he said. “I didn’t agree with that. I used to work for and with some old timers who were professional second classes. Clearly, they had been in for several years but they were some of the best second classes we had. Us youngsters could look to them for leadership and advice and especially for professional expertise. They were good role models at that time...not in the field of advancement but they knew what they were doing and they were the best damn second class petty officers in the Navy. When we lost those petty officers, we lost some stability. There are people that just can’t take tests and some really don’t have the ambition to go any further. They are happy in their niche in life and they do a good job with it. The force out started before my tenure and continued on through it.”

On the other side of the coin, Sanders saw other petty officers advancing too rapidly.

“There are sailors that go through the schooling process and come out as E-5’s,” he points out. “They are paid well and perhaps we need to do that to retain or attract them into the service, but they are not petty officers second class. Once they get out to the fleet, they realize that they are not prepared to meet their military duties. Some of the seamen out there eat them up because they are rookies inexperienced as petty officers.”

“I wish there was a program, similar to the old pro pay system, wherein we could reward these bright young sailors without promoting them at such an early stage in their Naval career. I have a lot of respect for third and second class petty officers. They should be mature, have leadership abilities and earn the respect of the people who work for them. Third class petty officers should have seasoning, hands-on work and be part of the command, not just products of the school system.”

Sanders heartily approved of the school system developed through the Senior Enlisted Academy. After a trip to Newport, he reported via The Direct Line that “the instructors are superb professionals,” the curriculum “covers a wide range of subjects which provides the students an educational and practical experience to enhance their leadership abilities” and the students are “extremely knowledgeable and highly motivated.”

Sanders left his mark on the Academy by replacing the officer assigned as director with a master chief petty officer. He also worked to get funding for

construction of a new building to house the academy.

Special Friend

When Sanders needed special guidance or assistance with a particular problem or issue, he turned to the CNP's executive assistant, Captain Jeremy "Mike" Boorda.

"I felt particular akin to him for a couple of reasons," he said of the captain who was destined to become one of the Navy's most popular and outspoken Chiefs of Naval Personnel. "He was a very personable individual and he appeared to always shoot straight. He wasn't hesitant to talk with me so I felt I had an ally. If I was doing something right, he would so say. If I was heading in the wrong direction, he would so say. I felt comfortable with him and I am very pleased to see him in the position he is in today."

Time to be Navy

Sanders was genuinely concerned with the future of the Navy. He could see the trend to downsizing and the growing need for quality people. He placed the responsibility for building quality squarely on the shoulders of the senior enlisted leadership. In his November 1984 issue of *The Direct Line*, he advised his readers that the Navy had asked Congress for a 12,064 increase to end strength. Only 6,500 was approved.

"This shortfall," he wrote, "coupled with the neglect of the past, challenges the Navy to use its assets to the maximum if we are to continue to meet all commitments. This is especially true with personnel."

While he noted that quality of first termers was at an all time high and "retention of our highly skilled technical complement personnel has never been better," he pointed out the "driving force" would continue to be the career Navy professional.

"Master Chief, Senior Chief and Chief - the Navy has never needed you more," he stressed. "It's clear that from your years of service you have made a career decision to remain in the Navy THAT'S NOT ENOUGH! It's time to be a professional military man/woman. It's time to be Navy."

"There is no fat, no excess, no fall back position. Sailors must be properly trained and led. They must be able to perform the duties they were hired on to do. Nowhere is this more true than in the chief petty officer ranks. Chiefs can and make the difference; it's our Navy, it's our responsibility. Although our CPO creed states, in part, 'these responsibilities do not appear in print,' they should be indelibly stamped in our hearts."

In his final word in the October, 1985 issue of *The Direct Line*, Sanders said:

“Our Navy is on a proper and true course. KEEP IT THERE!”

Today, Sanders is the executive assistant to the executive vice president of the Naval Aviation Museum Foundation in Pensacola, Florida. His wife, Mozelle, died in 1990. Unlike his counterparts, Sanders does not maintain a close contact with the office he once held. Friends, acquaintances, or active duty members who seek him out for assistance in dealing with Navy problems are all told the same thing: go through the proper channels. Sanders left the Navy feeling good that it was a “little bit better” for his having been there, but he closed that door behind him.



MCPON William H. Piackett.

Leadership Development:

Master Chief William H. Plackett

October 1, 1985 - September 9, 1988

“During my two-year tour as the Chief of Naval Personnel it was my great privilege to receive the forthright, candid, and always accurate advice of Master Chief Bill Plackett. He, and his wife, the charming Karen Plackett, were a strong team who always had the very best interests of the Navy Enlisted Family at heart. It was Bill Plackett who first suggested mentioning real sailors’ names and problems when testifying on ‘The Hill.’ Like all his advice, it was good, right on the mark, and helped us gain support for important personnel improvement initiatives.”

Vice Admiral Dudley L. Carison, USN(Ret.)
Former CNP

As a small boy in the rural town of Paxton, Illinois, William “Bill” Plackett saw lots of soldiers coming back home after WW II, but it was the few sailors returning with their seabags that captured his imagination.

Growing up in Paxton, he did his time as a farm hand, a grocery store clerk, and a pin setter at a bowling alley. But, when he married his childhood sweetheart, Karen Mullinax, he began looking for stability in a career that would offer challenge and educational opportunities. The Navy was his answer.

He enlisted on October 18, 1956. After graduation from boot camp, he began training as a radioman at “A” school in Norfolk, Virginia. His first duty station was with the Naval Control of Shipping Office on Bahrain Island in the Persian Gulf. There, he met Radioman First Class Travis Short.

“The thing that impressed me about Short was the fact that he never stopped trying or buying academically to improve himself,” Plackett said. “He started out just about like I did, a non-high school graduate from a small town. He came into the Navy and with his boot straps, pulled himself up. He made chief and was selected for Limited Duty Officer (LDO). He retired as a lieutenant commander. He had a very positive impact on me.”

Plackett made third class petty officer while in Bahrain and transferred in August 1959 to the staff of Commander, Amphibious Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, embarked in *Mount McKinley*.

In May 1960 he advanced to second class. During his next tour, he served on the staff of Commander in Chief, Allied Forces Southern Europe in Naples, Italy.

While on the staff of Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, he advanced to first class.

Following that tour, he went back to the schoolhouse for Radioman “B” school and was assigned to Representative, Commander East Force/Naval Control of Shipping Office. He was there during the Arab-Israeli War. In September 1967, just 11 years after joining the Navy, he was selected as a chief petty officer.

After a tour aboard *Forrestal*, which included an extended ten-month deployment in the Mediterranean, he served as an instructor at Radioman “B” school at Bainbridge, Maryland.

Plackett applied and was selected for the Associates Degree Completion Program (ADCOP) in April 1971. Four months later, he enrolled in classes at Pensacola Junior College in Pensacola, Florida. While a student, he was advanced to senior chief. He graduated with honors in December 1972 and was awarded an academic scholarship at the University of West Florida in Pensacola. One year later, he graduated Magna Cum Laude with a bachelor of science degree in vocational education.

Following a second tour on *Forrestal* and his selection as master chief, he assumed duties as Director of the Communications School, Fleet Training Center, Norfolk, Virginia. In 1979, he was named Command Master Chief for Commander, Training Command, U.S. Atlantic Headquarters and subsequently became the first Force Master Chief of the Atlantic Fleet Training Command in July 1981.

Admiral Harry Train, Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, selected Plackett to be his fleet master chief in July 1982. When nominations were solicited for the job of Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy in the fall of 1984, Plackett submitted his package with a strong endorsement from Admiral Wesley McDonald, then CINCLANTFLT.

From the 41 candidates selected by the E-8/9 board, Plackett emerged as one of the four finalists invited to Washington for interviews with CNO Admiral Watkins and others. His fellow candidates were: Master Chief Electronics Technician Barry L. Fichter; Master Chief Aviation Antisubmarine Warfare Operator Ronnie D. Cole, and Master Chief Aviation Boatswain’s Mate Donald E. Benson.

Working Smarter

During an interview with *Navy Times* reporter John Burlage on the eve of his selection, Plackett echoed many of the concerns his predecessors had for the professionalism among the senior enlisted community.

“We’re on a brink now of stepping over the boundary of traditional uses and employment of enlisted personnel,” he was quoted. “...We’re going to have to

work smarter with fewer people doing more jobs, we're going to have to develop a professional progression through (all the enlisted ranks) as we go along. We need to tighten up our leadership training at all levels."

In the rough draft of that same interview, which included the other three candidates as well as MCPON Sanders, a quote from Sanders, not used in the published article, reveals that Plackett had hit on a key point that perhaps gave him the edge in Admiral Watkins' final selection.

"I know from my conversations with Admiral Watkins," Sanders said, "that he has a definite idea also of what these people (senior enlisted leaders) should be doing, and I think he is going to work with the next Master Chief of the Navy in achieving those things. We've got the foundation; now I think we can go ahead and build."

On July 17, during the press conference in which he announced Plackett as his choice for MCPON, Admiral Watkins said the job of MCPON was "a very important job and one which I assign the highest priority."

On August 19, 1985, Plackett was relieved by Master Chief Air Controlman William "Bill" Smith as the Atlantic Fleet Master Chief. Admiral McDonald, CINCLANTFLT, set a precedence by calling for a special ceremony to mark the transfer of duties.

"This job is so important to me that I felt we should have a special ceremony for this change of office," he said, according to an article in the Norfolk-based *Navy News* newspaper.

Free of his duties at CINCLANT, Plackett began travelling with MCPON Sanders during his last month in office. As a fleet and force master chief, Plackett had lots of experience listening and talking to sailors in large or small groups. During a visit to Memphis, Tennessee, where Sanders was the



Flanked by the Armed Forces heads (E-10s), MCPON Plackett discusses quality of life in the Navy with members of the House of Representatives during an annual Congressional testimony.

guest speaker at the Navy Memphis Khaki Ball, Plackett fielded a question from a young sailor who wanted to know why he had stayed in the Navy so long?

“Well, there are a lot of reasons,” answered the incoming MCPON, “but it’s mainly because no matter where I am or what I do in the Navy, I’m always having fun.”

No Sweeping Changes

After assuming office on October 4, Plackett shared his view of the next three years with Chief Journalist Fred J. Klinkenberger, Jr., of the Norfolk Naval Base newspaper, *Soundings*.

“Plackett does not anticipate recommending any sweeping changes for the Navy’s enlisted community,” Klinkenberger wrote.

He quoted Plackett, “I want to set a tone for the three years that I’m going to be there that indicates basically keeping a steady strain or ‘steady as she goes.’ Let’s not tinker with success, let’s not change for the sake of change.”

In 1985, Plackett and the rest of the Navy was riding on a wave of pride in the wake of the recent U.S. attack on Libya as a retaliation for terrorism.

“We were on a roll,” Plackett said in retrospect. “We still are, but to have been a leader during that time, to see the pride on sailors’ faces after we bombed

Libya, they beamed. We had some problems but we were willing to admit it and say, 'Let's take them on and fix them the best way we can.'

A “Road Map”

In his first issue of *The Direct Line* and his first column in *Link*, Plackett listed eight goals, his “roadmap” for his first year in office:

1. Enhance the “One Navy” concept through improved cooperation and communications across all warfare lines;
2. Maintain currency in attitudes and issues in the Fleet and the Naval shore establishment. Identify problem areas affecting welfare and morale of the Navy and work within the chain of command to correct them;
3. Continue to promote individual pride and unit esprit de corps through improved professionalism throughout the Navy;
4. Promote improved military professionalism through entire enlisted community of the United States Navy;
5. Improve dissemination of information on personnel related matters down to the deckplates;
6. Place the command master chief program on solid footing;
7. Enforcement of the Navy's drug/alcohol program;
8. Stimulate interest in the Navy-wide ‘Get out and vote’ program.”

On the Road

Plackett adapted quickly to his new job and began travelling soon after taking office. In November, he was in San Diego telling sailors on board *Cape Cod*:

“We're more than 500,000 members strong. I cannot express the importance of enlisted folks and the involvement we have in our Navy. I will seek to improve our methods of management and leadership in order to become a more professional Navy...to improve military professionalism, technical expertise, our methods of training and the way we conduct our day-to-day business.”

Back in Washington, D.C., in December, he addressed a group of E1-E6 sailors at Naval Security Station:

“We don't need a bunch of new programs. We need some good stable application of the programs that we have in place. Nothing would please me more than to walk away from here three years from now without a single uniform change taking place in the Navy. We need to have that stability and I'm going to work toward that in every opportunity.”

On his favorite subject, he told the sailors: “If we can provide role models,

the opportunity to get leadership experience, and formalized instruction in leadership skills, reinforced at various stages in career development, then we can foster the development of professionalism; the rounding-out of the enlisted community as a totally professional military community.”

A Role Model

In the January-March 1986 issue of *Link* magazine, Plackett offered his own story as a role model:

“Twenty-nine years ago, one young American entered the Navy. He was a high school dropout and definitely under-educated. Fortunately, that sailor recognized early the need for a sound technical education in order to succeed. Additionally, there were off-duty educational programs available to him. I am proud to say that this young man did take advantage of all training opportunities available and used that education to become the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy. Since I am that sailor, I can say with conviction. . . education is the key to success.”

For his own role model, Plackett admitted to an *All Hands*’ reporter that the third MCPON, Master Chief Operation’s Specialist Robert Walker inspired him with his openness and honesty.

“At that point I was still a young, hard-charging chief. He was an individual who awakened in me a desire to do better. I never saw him back down from a confrontation. If you’re right, you continue going. You have to have perseverance, and he had a high level. That’s something I admire in people.”

Fleet, Force and C M/C Program

Like Walker and the other MCPONs before him, Plackett looked to the Fleet, Force and Command Master Chief Program to keep him informed on fleet issues.

“The program not only gets the seamen’s feelings up to me, but it gets those feelings to the chain of command at all levels,” Plackett said. “And that’s what’s encouraging to me about the command, fleet and force program - the fact that the chain of command now is much better apprised of how their people feel than they were before.”

But Plackett created quite a stir among the command master chiefs in the same *Navy Times* article mentioned previously. One of the questions reporter John Burlage put to the MCPON candidates was, “Where would you like to see the Navy’s command master chief program go?”

Plackett’s answer in the published article was: “This is going to sound like a political cop out, but I would like to see the command master chief program self-destruct. I would like to believe that in the Navy of the future that our chain of

command and our professional development are going to progress to the point that they're going to be able to take care of all those things in the normal day-to-day operation of that division, department, whatever, so that we don't have to have a specialized individual who does those things. Keep in mind, that is an idealistic and a philosophical projection into the future, and I think everything we do should work toward that."

The rough draft of the article shows that Burlage asked a follow up question: "Manage so well you manage yourself out of a job?"

Plackett's answer: "Exactly. You know, that was a stated objective of Admiral Watkins when he first talked to the fleet and force master chiefs three years ago come October. I had never thought of it in that context, but it makes a lot of sense. The key to that whole thing is to reestablish in the chain of command the wherewithal we've had taken away to a large extent, to take care of our people. Doggone it, that's our job, to take care of our people, and we've got to have those resources available to do it."

In the October 1985 issue of *The Direct Line*, his first as MCPON, Plackett ran the following article, headlined, "C M/C Article Results in Strong Feedback:"

"As a result of the feedback on my comments regarding the C M/C program during a recent *Navy Times* interview, I would like to remove any doubts in anyone's mind as to my commitment to the program.

"Yes, I do stand by my words - I would like to see the chain of command take up the job of our C M/Cs. But is that a realistic philosophy reflective of the situation as it is? No, it is not and that's what the article said.

"I stand by my record as a strong advocate of the program and can assure each and every one of you that there will be no voice more adamant in support of a program which has proven to be a highly valuable tool in the chain of command.

"The Command Master Chief program will be here for a long time and I am committed to making it a vital and professional entity in our Navy."

While Plackett was not responsible for the change, his first issue of *The Direct Line* also carried the announcement of a major revision to the fleet and force program.

"Effectively immediately," the article began, "the position of Fleet Master Chief for Naval Shore Activities has been disestablished. This move was taken as a result of the continuing review of OPNAV associated billets and in an effort to delete those billets which are redundant in terms of overlapping areas of responsibility with the major claimant fleet master chief. All of the functions now provided by the NAVSHORE Fleet Master Chief will be incorporated by the MCPON's office. The Shore Sailor of the Year will be reassigned to that office. Those force master chiefs who were grouped under NAVSHORE will forward personnel related issues destined for the CNO Advisory Panel through MCPON's office."

Plackett also moved the Shore Sailor of the Year Program to his office, and with it the responsibility for coordinating and planning SOY Recognition Week

for the CINCPACFLT, CINCLANTFLT, Shore and Reserve Sailor of the Year.

The February 1986 issue of *The Direct Line* announced changes to the CM/C program. OPNAVINST 5400.37 made all E-9 personnel (including those promoted without pay) eligible for the program. NMPC was given the job of identifying selectees and assigning them in accordance with the program's instruction.

Another change was the requirement that after one tour in a C M/C assignment, a master chief would be assigned within their rating unless specifically requesting continued assignments in the program. Master chiefs who demonstrated satisfactory performance in a C M/C tour could request consideration for the Navy Enlisted Code (NEC) 9580 (Command Master Chief).

In the following issue, Plackett addressed the issue of the command/senior/chief badge.

"The policy on who is authorized to wear that badge is clear," Plackett wrote. "The badge is authorized for only command representatives. If that unit's officer is titled anything other than 'commander' or 'commanding officer' then the badge is not authorized. Before hanging a badge on your uniform it is incumbent upon you to determine if you rate it."

LMET a Favorite Topic

Leadership Management and Education Training (LMET) was a favorite topic of Plackett's. Though the program had its roots in Whittet's era, it evolved through the next ten years with changes made by Walker and Crow. It wasn't until Sanders' tenure that the program really began solidifying but it was still experiencing problems with attendance. Plackett believed the program was essential to the development of good petty officer leadership skills. He pushed to make attendance a prerequisite for advancement to the next pay grade for senior petty officers.

"As a second class, I had quite a lot of responsibility and I had many leadership tasks that I had to go about but I wasn't trained in any of them," he said. "That's when I consciously started thinking about leadership training."

Plackett had what he called "major heartburn" with the existing curriculum for LMET.

"We had a touchy feely course of instruction," he said, "and we don't need that. We are a military organization. We need to teach human behavior, practicality of human behavior, we need to do case studies to show situations and let people work the situations. We need to do role playing and those kinds of things. But we don't need to try to make a brain surgeon out of a boatswain's mate. What we need to teach is practical leadership skills that work."

In June 1987, Plackett attended a military leadership conference at the United States Naval Academy. The level of participation included 12 flag officers, active

and retired, including the Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Trost, a former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Moorer and a number of academic researchers noted for contributions to the field of leadership. Plackett gave a presentation at the conference on "Milestones in Leadership Development."

Following the conference, Plackett used the presentation as the basis for an article distributed through Navy Editor Service (NES). It was given space in numerous internal publications, including *Sea Services Weekly* at the Washington Navy Yard, *Kings Bay Periscope* in Kings Bay, Georgia, and *The Golden Eagle* at Lemoore, California.

The article provides a historical look at the development of formal leadership training in the Navy. It read, in part: "With me, as with my contemporaries, leadership was largely developed through on-the-job training. Until the late '70s, formal 'schoolhouse' leadership training was not considered essential in developing good leaders. Historically, we were dealing with a non-volunteer Navy, and poor leadership that led sailors to leave the Navy was tolerated.

"Fitful attempts were made at establishing leadership training for some groups prior to 1978: instructor training the '60s and early '70s had a two-week leadership course as part of the curriculum; chief petty officer academies were established at several sites; and some individual type commanders established leadership schools. The mid-1970s marked the establishment of leadership management training at a number of shore sites. Then, in 1978, the Chief of Naval Operations directed a more well-defined program of leadership instruction in the form of the leadership and management education and training courses (LMET), designed to provide leadership instruction to second class petty officers through chiefs. In the early '80s, petty officer and chief petty officer indoctrination courses were implemented to be administered at the command level. Each program has a different sponsor and there is no connectivity between the programs.

"Currently the Navy is reaching only about nine percent of the eligible population with the LMET program.

"Advancement prerequisites, including required formal training, internal command training on the job - either through general military training or correspondence courses - must be formulated in recognition of the importance of leadership growth and its relationship to personal excellence. These things are not out of the realm of possibility now. If we are going to realize the potential of limited manpower resources from now into the next century, we must better prepare our enlisted professionals for the challenges they face as leaders."

During the Fall 1987 session of the CNO Master Chief Advisory Panel, the CNO tasked the members to look at developing an Enlisted Leadership Training Continuum that would put enlisted leadership development courses under one sponsor and would provide a building platform for training leaders from third class petty officer to chief.

Training for Command Master Chiefs

Training for command master chiefs also became a primary concern for MCPON Plackett. As the Atlantic Fleet Master Chief, he had called together command master chiefs from throughout the fleet to form a study group for the purpose of establishing a training program for C M/Cs.

“We had a command master chief program but nobody knew what the hell it was about,” Plackett pointed out. “There were command master chiefs out there who didn’t know the resources that were available to them. Were not familiar with the Navy directives that would have been helpful to them.”

One of the members of Plackett’s study group was AVCM Duane R. Bushey, destined to become the seventh MCPON.

“I brought in ten successful command master chiefs from good commands who were doing their job in my estimation,” he said. “I broke them into two groups.”

Both groups were directed by Plackett to list individually every task that they performed as a command master chief. The groups were then asked to make a list of the tasks that were common among to all five members, and finally, the two lists were combined to make a list of the most common tasks that the master chiefs performed that contributed to their success as command master chiefs.

“We took that list down to Training Command, Atlantic and asked them to write a syllabus and a curriculum based on the list of tasks,” Plackett said. “We took the finished product down to Naval District Headquarters and asked them to run a pilot on it. It’s things like that that start evolving and will transcend MCPONs.”

Plackett would retire before the Navy-wide version of the C M/C Course was completed and made available throughout the fleet.

Morale High

Nine months into the job, Plackett shared some of his observations gained through his travels around the fleet in the July 1986 *The Direct Line*.

“The morale throughout the Navy is probably as high as it has been in my memory,” he wrote. “The performance of our ships, aircraft, and their crews during the Libyan raids has been a source of pride to all of us.”

He reported that the “material condition of our ships and stations is outstanding,” retention “is still good despite continuing budget actions and their impact on quality of life,” and leadership was the “best in recent memory.”

He added a warning to his positive assessment, however, that senior enlisted leaders “cannot go to sleep at the switch.”

“Be ever alert for the person who is putting out bum dope and correct their information quickly,” he stressed. “KEEP RUMORS UNDER CONTROL.”

Plackett reminded leaders to “recognize your people at every opportunity” and “work to remove ‘petty’ regulations.”

In that same issue of *The Direct Line*, second quarter fiscal year 1986 separation statistics showed family separations holding steady as the number one reason for voluntary separations from the Navy. In the mid-80’s, the Navy was developing a trend for reducing the amount of time ships and aircraft squadrons spend away from home port. The goals were: limiting time away from home port between overhauls to 50 percent; making six months the maximum length of deployments; requiring no less than a two to one turnaround ratio for deploying units, allowing one year of non-deployed operations out of home ports after a six-month deployment.

Quality of Life Programs

Quality of life programs took on even greater emphasis during Plackett’s three years. Family service centers were springing up and taking an active role as command resources both in and out CONUS. Ombudsmen were earning a respected place alongside the chain of command and medical care for dependents was expanding through a new dental care program and the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS).

In the fall 1986 edition of *Wifeline*, the new CNO, Admiral C.A.H. Trost outlined his commitment to “people programs.”

“Over the past six years we have witnessed the careful buildup of our Navy and the fruition of our many people programs,” he pointed out, “including the more than 60 family service centers around the world. These personnel programs must be sustained because people are clearly the primary determinant of readiness.”



Armed Forces Senior Enlisted Advisors joined MCPON Plackett (center) at Walt Disney World in Orlando to dedicate May as the Armed Forces Appreciation Month by the city of Orlando. This one-of-a-kind photo at the American Adventure Showcase in Epcot Center caught the services' E-10s with their favorite Disney characters in colonial costume.

Admiral Trost said he had seen firsthand while serving as Commander of the Atlantic Fleet that a "secure and 'well taken care of' Navy family was vital to motivated sailors and fleet readiness."

"My top priority as CNO will be to maintain the best quality of life for all members of our Navy family through continued support of our personnel programs and working hard with Congress and our own defense establishment," he said.

True to his word, the FY 87 budget approved by Congress included many items having direct impact on families. Funding was approved for implementation of a voluntary dependent dental insurance program, beginning August 1, 1987 which covers 100 percent of preventive, diagnostic, and

emergency dental care and 80 percent of filling and dental appliance repair costs. Military spouse employment preference was expanded to include GS-5 and GS-6 ratings. And, family service center and ombudsman volunteers could get reimbursed for certain out-of-pocket expenses.

In the fall of 1986, the CNO and MCPON Plackett invited the spouses of the members of the CNO Master Chief Advisory Panel to come to Washington with their husbands for the fall conference. Chaired by Mrs. Karen Plackett, the first spouse conference discussed eight specific areas of concern for Navy families: the impact of limited family housing; the effectiveness of Family Service centers; spouse perceptions on quality of life issues; the effectiveness of Navy publications; internal information; spouse employment issues; the Family Advocacy Program; and overseas screening.

While their husbands were studying and forming recommendations on policies impacting the overall quality of Navy life, the spouses were putting together their own recommendations for improvements. Their point papers were presented to the CNO at the end of the week, along with the final report out by the CNO Master Chief Advisory Panel.

On March 6, 1987, OPNAVINST 1752.2, detailing the Navy's position and guidance for operating the Family Advocacy Program, was issued. The Navy had established a child advocacy program in 1976. An expansion in 1979 included spouses and the name was changed to family advocacy.

The role of the MCPON's wife as an ombudsman gained further recognition in January 1988 when Karen Plackett was officially appointed Ombudsman-at-Large by the CNO. Procedures were established to allow for reimbursement of expenses associated with her travel.

Women in the Navy

Women in the Navy were granted increased opportunities for sea duty in FY 87. Based on increased availability of berthing, submarine tenders began taking on more women, E-6 and below, over a period of several months.

In December 1986, the CNO convened a working group in Washington to discuss issues concerning women in the Navy. Members were the MCPON; CINCUSNAVEUR Fleet Master Chief Ronnie D. Cole; CNET Force Master Chief Tommy L. Connell; CINCPAC Fleet Master Chief William R. Huie; CINCLANT Fleet Master Chief William "Bill" Smith; Commander, Naval Reserve Force Master Chief Larry L. Sorenson; Master Chief Kathleen Seader; and Senior Chiefs Beverly Brennan, Bonnie Peters, Ginger Simpson and Donna Williams.

Based on a recommendation from the CNO Master Chief Petty Officer Advisory Panel, the group looked at effective use of women, good rating mixes, and the impact of pregnancy on readiness. Upward mobility for women with

regards to General Detailing (GENDET) and Rating Entry General Apprentices (REGA), non-traditional ratings and promotional opportunity were also discussed. Member-to-member marriages, collocations, and the impact on fleet readiness, single parents, and child care centers also received the group's consideration.

Briefings on current policies concerning the subjects addressed by the group were given by NMPC experts. Included on the agenda was a briefing by the Navy representative of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Service (DACO WITS).

The final report with recommendations from the group was given verbally to VCNO Admiral J.B. Busey with a written report to the CNO.

Another issue concerning Women in the Navy surfaced in 1987. Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger formed a DOD senior level task force to study women in the military and to address the existing policy on sexual harassment. In September, 1987, Secretary of the Navy James H. Webb, Jr., announced the formation of a Navy and Marine Corps panel to study women's issues. The group was tasked with a comprehensive examination of current policy on utilization of women and the implementation of that policy within the Navy. The study group's findings were released in December and were incorporated in the DOD task force report.

Visiting NAS Lemoore, California, in December, 1987, Plackett addressed the issue of sexual harassment and the findings from the study group.

"We are not using the controls we have to make things right," he was quoted in *The Golden Eagle*, the base newspaper. "The majority of the women surveyed said if they raised the problem of sexual harassment it would not be addressed by the chain of command. Some commands are doing nothing but making a paperwork shuffle while others have their programs squared away."

"This is a very sad comment and I think we will see more programs and classes come about because of this current situation," he prophesied.

Communicating with "Snuffy"

In July 1988, a few months before leaving office, Plackett talked with a reporter from *Navy News* in Norfolk about the commitment he made two years earlier to improve communication.

"How do we communicate with the deckplate?" he asked. "How do we talk to Snuffy in the fire room? And how do we get the word down to Snuffy?"

Even when he is in his office at the Navy Annex, Plackett said that he sought direct communication with sailors there.

"I will get up from my desk in this big office I have and walk out into the passageway and look for a third class or a seaman or whoever's walking by and

I'll just snag him," Plackett told the reporter. Then he asks the sailor to read a new Navy policy or message that's headed for the fleet and he asks the sailor to explain it.

"What we're doing is sanity checks," he explained, "trying to improve the communication."

Among the concerns that sailors were communicating to Plackett during his visits to commands at sea and ashore were enlisted housing, health care, the AIDS epidemic, and retirement benefits. Nearing the end of his career and his term of office, Plackett told *Navy Times* reporter Brian Mitchell that he had seen improvements in all those areas with the exception of housing.

"Housing costs in many cities have exceeded the overall rate of inflation," Plackett told Mitchell. "We don't find ourselves in the Navy in many low cost-of-living areas, so consequently the impact on our junior enlisted particularly is more pronounced today than it was three years ago."



During his tenure, MCPON Plackett was known as a strong advocate of the feedback program. In December 1986, he conducted the First Women at Sea Symposium to discuss issues such as: single parenthood, pregnancy, sea/shore rotation, advancement, and career opportunity.

Members of the panel were, from left: PNCM Beverly Brennan, YNCM Kathleen Seader, NCCS Ginger Simpson, MCPON Plackett (seated), HMCS Donna Williams, and PNCS Bonnie Peters.

The “paranoia” that was associated with the AIDS epidemic and mandatory HLTV-III testing early in Plackett’s tenure had been controlled by a fleet-wide message on the Navy’s policy.

“Navy health care has improved since 1985 with the creation of contractor-run medical clinics for service people,” Plackett said in the article, “but more improvements are needed.”

Retirement concerns were created by Congressional action to reduce future retired pay for service members entering after October 1986, Plackett said.

“That change caused and still is causing today a lot of senior and master chief petty officers to leave the Navy,” he said. “They’re at the 22-or 23-year mark and they’re looking at changes going on around them that impact on their pay or on their potential retirement.”

High Year Tenure (HYT)

While concerns about retirement benefits may have caused some senior enlisted to leave the Navy, many more were staying - perhaps a bit longer than they should.

In 1987, MCPON Plackett began working on a problem that had long plagued the Navy’s advancement system. To provide upward mobility for junior personnel, senior personnel must move up or out. Stagnation at the top limits advancements at the next level and all the way down, impacting retention and morale, particularly in overmanned ratings.

Plackett’s research revealed that, while a reenlistment policy existed to prevent such stagnation, some 7,500 people, E-9 and below, were serving beyond their mandatory retirement dates. Among that group were an estimated 550 with more than 30 years in. The source of the problem was tracked to commanding officers, including top level flag officers, who were circumventing the system by reenlisting those people they considered valuable, despite longevity standards. Enforcement of the existing policy was too weak or nonexistent. Tracking violators proved time consuming and too often nonproductive.

Plackett began hammering out a revised policy that included a board to consider requests for waivers from commanding officers who wanted to keep an individual beyond High Year Tenure (HYT) points.

Master Chief George “Dave” Monroe, Plackett’s administrative assistant, recalls the “bloody battles” his boss encountered as he tried to get the revised policy approved.

“Most people were not against HYT as a concept,” he explained, “but neither did they want to lose that experienced petty officer. And it isn’t easy for anyone

to have to tell a sailor, who is still willing and capable of contributing to the mission, to go home. But it had to be done.”

Prior to his retirement, Plackett received approval for the revised policy from the CNO. It was left to his successor to fine tune it and push for implementation.

MCPON Challenge

On the eve of his retirement, Plackett was interviewed by Chief Journalist Gwynn Schultz, editor of *Sea Services Weekly*. He spoke of the challenges he faced as MCPON.

“The challenge as Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy is to face that new situation, deal with each with dignity, and overcome the problem,” he said. “My goal as MCPON was to do these three years and finish knowing that I have not made any chief petty officer ashamed of being a chief. It goes back to ethics and being able and having the courage to stand up to the CNO, or any flag or captain, because you hold those individuals in high esteem, and say to them that they are wrong. It’s a very lonely feeling, but that’s what this position is for.”

After retirement, Plackett and his wife, Karen, went back to the home they left in Virginia Beach, Virginia. He is currently the Military Marketing Director for Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. He shuttles from Norfolk to the company headquarters in New York City. Both he and Karen remain active members of the Navy community.



MCPON Duane R. Bushey.

Quality of Life:

Master Chief Duane R. Bushey

September 9, 1988 - August 28, 1992

“The biggest contribution I made in four years as CNO was my selection of Duane Bushey to follow Bill Plackett as MCPON. Bill and Karen did a superb job! Selection of a replacement was tough....But, Duane and Sue Bushey seemed to offer a unique quality in their ability to communicate with our people, that special sense of empathy, understanding and commitment that marks true leadership capability. They’ve proven that no challenge was too great, no concern too small to warrant action. They’ve truly taken the pulse of our Navy men and women and helped the Navy’s top leadership meet its responsibilities to our most precious asset: Our people.”

Admiral C. A. H. Trost, USN(Ret.)
Former CNO

Roger Bushey farmed, fished, worked for the state and, in his spare time, drove an 18-wheeler.

He taught his only son, Duane, how to till the earth for planting, repair equipment when it broke, and to respect authority and the rights of others. When Duane joined the Navy, his father was very proud, but he always believed that one day, his son would return to the farm.

Duane Bushey thought so too. He never planned to make the Navy a career.

It just happened.

One summer’s night in 1962, while sitting on a sand dune at Ocean City, Maryland, Bushey told his childhood sweetheart, Susan, that he wanted to go see what was on the other side of that ocean. She didn’t understand. Her plans were made to go off to college in September. He had sent in applications too. She didn’t know that during his last month of high school, he had decided to join the Navy and see the world.

“Where does that leave me?” she asked.

“I’ll come back and get you,” he promised.

Three days later, he and his friend, Paige Pilchard, found a recruiter in Salisbury, Maryland, and joined the Navy.

Although he never took a book home to study while he was in high school, Bushey scored high enough on the entrance exam to be guaranteed any “A”

school he wanted in the Navy. He signed a contract with that guarantee.

Somewhere around the fifth week of boot camp, he went to see the classifier. "My classifier was a great big, burly chief," Bushey said. "He had tattoos all up and down both arms. I've said over the years that he was a boatswain's mate but I really don't know what he was. He looked down at me and said, What do you want to be, boy?"

Bushey had prepared himself for the question by looking at the pictures of the different ratings in a book the recruits were given.

"I want to be an aviation electronics technician," he answered.

The chief opened Bushey's high school record. He saw some "Bs," a few more "Cs," and a lot of "Ds," but none of what he was looking for. To go into his chosen field, Bushey needed the tough courses he had opted not to take in high school: algebra, trigonometry, calculus.

"Why don't you be a sonarman?" the chief classifier suggested.

"I don't want to be a sonarman," Bushey answered. "I want aviation."

"You're too dumb to be an aviation electronics technician," the chief growled. "Why don't you be a sonarman?"

Bushey continued to hold his ground.

Finally, the classifier gave him other choices in the aviation field and Bushey picked aviation electrician's mate. That too required more math courses than he had in his school record.

The chief said: "You're too dumb to be that too. Why don't you be a sonarman?"

But Bushey wasn't an ordinary recruit. He had a signed contract with a guarantee. If the Navy couldn't give him what he wanted, in his mind, the contract was broken.

After another round, in which neither he nor the chief made headway, Bushey decided it was time to take his contract and go home.

When he stood up to leave, the chief's eyes opened wide.

"I didn't tell you to leave," he yelled at the recruit. "Where are you going?"

"I'm out of here," Bushey told the chief. "I signed a contract in Salisbury, Maryland, that said I could be anything I wanted to be in the U.S. Navy. I picked one and you said I couldn't be that. I picked another and you told me I couldn't do that either. I'm going home. I know how to drive tractors and I got a farm back there and, by God, I'm going back to Salisbury, Maryland. I don't have to put up with this."

Bushey got his orders to aviation electrician's mate "A" school and for the next several months, he spent long days and nights trying to prove the chief wrong. He was not dumb and he would not "flunk out."

"I graduated number three in my class, but that chief was right," he said, recalling the incident 29 years later. "I had to take remedial math to catch up with everybody else. My rear end is so small because I spent from 10 o'clock at night until 2 o'clock in the morning sitting in the head on a john because that was the only place you could have lights on at that time of night in the barracks. I would

go in there to study algebra and trig, a slide rule, and calculus. But I wasn't about to flunk out because he told me I was going to."

Today, Bushey admits that the burly chief probably did the "best thing he could ever do for me."

"Now that I'm more senior," he said, "I realize the value in motivating people through that kind of play acting. He certainly made a big impact on me. If I was a better artist, I could sit down and draw his face today. I can't tell you his name but I saw his face every day through "A" school."

Chiefs Make Big Impression

The classifier wasn't the only chief who made an impression on Bushey as a young sailor. Recently, when asked by a young petty officer who, in his naval career, had made the biggest impact, Bushey told him it was the "chief's community as a whole."

"My company commander in boot camp was an engineman chief named Lamb," he said. "The meanest son of a gun I ever met. But he taught me something that I never forgot. One day, we were waiting to get our dress blues issued. I was standing by my locker and he walked by. I came to attention and he looked at me and asked why I was just standing around. I told him I was waiting to get my blues issued. He made me do 50 pushups. When I was through, he walked off but 15 minutes later, he came back and I was standing in the same place. He asked me again why I was just standing around and I gave him the same answer. He made me do 50 more pushups. Well, we did this about three or four times and finally, he stopped me and said, 'You sure aren't very smart, Bushey. Haven't you figured out why you are doing these pushups?' And I said, 'No, sir.' He said, Well, I'm going to give you a hint. In the U.S. Navy, you never just stand around waiting for something to happen. You make things happen. There is always something to do."

Bushey said that lesson stayed with him throughout his career.

"If I was standing somewhere not doing something, I felt that I was going to have to do 50 pushups," he said. "I didn't want to do that, so I always found something to do."

Comparing today's leadership with chiefs like Lamb and his classifier, Bushey believes that both were right for the times.

"It was a different style of leadership back then," he said, "but it was effective because young sailors like me feared and respected authority. We didn't ask questions like sailors do today. I'm not saying the way we do it today is wrong. It's just different. Everybody who grew up in society today is different."

Things He Didn't Like

There were things about the old style of leadership that Bushey did not like, but had very little control over as a junior enlisted. After “A” school, he was assigned to Naval Air Station, Patuxent River, Maryland. One day while leaving the station in his convertible, the wind blew his white hat off his head and out of the car. When he stopped to retrieve it, the base master-at-arms arrived and put him on report for being out of uniform. When Bushey argued that the wind had blown his hat off, the master-at-arms changed the charge to littering the roadside. Bushey was confined to the base and given extra duty.

“I was very bitter,” he said, “because it was the weekend and I was on my way to see Susan. Something like that would almost make you want to get out of the Navy. Instead, I just promised myself that when I became a leader, I would not abuse my power as that master-at-arms had done.”

Becoming a Leader

Bushey became a leader quickly. When he made third class in 1963, he married Susan Prause and reenlisted under the STAR program for an advanced electronics “B” school. After graduation, he and Susan loaded their belongings in a small trailer and drove across country to Long Beach, California, where he reported aboard *Kearsarge*. In 1965 he was advanced to second class and in 1967 to first class. While onboard *Kearsarge*, he earned designation as aircrewman and plane captain in the C-1A aircraft. Bushey and his shipmates were awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation for their performance in support of Seventh Fleet operations off the coast of Vietnam. Bushey served subsequent tours with Heavy Attack Squadron One Twenty-Three (VAH-123) at NAS Whidbey Island, Washington, and Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron One Thirty (VAQ-130) at NAS Alameda, California. With VAH-123, he served as a flight instructor for fleet replacement navigators in the A-3 aircraft and as celestial and radar navigation instructor with VAQ-130.



The proudest moment of MCPON Bushey's career came when he presented the Battle Streamer from the Persian Gulf War to President Bush during the National Victory Parade on June 8, 1991.

Before leaving VAQ-130 in 1973, Bushey was named the CINCPACFLT Shore Sailor of the Year. As a candidate for the honor, Bushey served as a model to wear the Navy's new coat and tie uniform before it was available to the fleet.

The Busheys left the west coast in 1973 for Norfolk, Virginia, where he was assigned to Aircraft Ferry Squadron Thirty One (VRF-31). There he qualified as an overwater navigator in several aircraft, a flight engineer for the P-3 *Orion* and a bombardier and navigator for the A-6 *Intruder*. He accumulated 4,283 flight hours and 844,506 "stork" miles as an enlisted navigator. In November 1974, he was advanced to chief petty officer and to senior chief in 1977. As the command senior chief, he sampled his first taste of the leadership role that would eventually

take him to Washington.

In January 1980, Bushey moved his wife and three children to El Paso, Texas, where he attended the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss. Six months later, he returned to VRF-31 as a master chief and took on collateral duties as command master chief. He then served as Command Master Chief for Commander Tactical Support Wing One (COMTACSUPWING ONE) in Norfolk. While there he was named as the Tidewater Virginia's Military Citizen of the Year for 1982.

One More Tour

In 1985, as his tour at COMTACSUPWING One drew to a close, Bushey submitted his retirement papers and had already set a date but Captain Paul W. Parcells, commanding officer of the pre-commissioning unit for *Theodore Roosevelt* in Norfolk, convinced Bushey to do one more tour as his command master chief.

For two years, Bushey worked hard, convinced that he was in his twilight tour. His goals were to make the new carrier "the best ship in the Navy, take it on a Med cruise, and then retire." Throughout his career, he had used spare time to talk to other sailors, asking about the jobs they did and their commands.

"I was always curious," he said. "If I was in between flights somewhere, and I saw a bunch of sailors standing around, I'd go talk to them. I was also a door opener, curious to know what was on the other side. There's hardly an air station in the U.S. Navy that I haven't been on."

On *Theodore Roosevelt*, he opened a lot of doors and talked to a lot of sailors. On the ship's closed-circuit TV, he talked to the crew during a weekly question and answer session. A strong believer in community involvement, he encouraged his sailors to volunteer their services during off-duty hours. In 1988, he and his family were recognized as Tidewater's Family of the Year. In 1988, when nominations were being sought for MCPON Plackett's relief, Bushey was persuaded to put in a package. It survived the E-8/9 selection board, the special selection board, and emerged among the top four candidates.

In June, Bushey and his wife joined AWCM(AW) Ronnie D. and Sarah Cole, CINCUSNAVEUR; MMCM(SW) Francis R. and Estrelita Patterson, C M/C Naval Training Station, San Diego; and ATCM(SW) William C. Smith, CINCPACFLT, for a week in Washington.

During the interview phase of the competition, Chief of Naval Personnel Vice Admiral Leon A. Edney kept Bushey in his office for what seemed to Bushey a "very long time."

"We talked about all kinds of issues," he said. "One question he asked me, I didn't know the answer, and I told him I didn't know. He kind of scowled at me and said, 'How are you going to be a MCPON if you don't know about all the

programs available to your people?’ I told him I may not know the answer but the career counselor probably did, and I would call him or go see him to get the answer.”

The Seventh MCPON

On June 17, Admiral Carlisle A.H. Trost announced that he had selected Bushey to be the seventh Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy.

“I feel like the alarm clock is going to go off soon and I’ll wake up,” Bushey told a reporter for *Navy News* during a phone interview shortly after the announcement.

In August, Bushey began his indoctrination for the job, travelling with MCPON Plackett and attending a series of briefings on the issues that he would be addressing during his term of office.

During early interviews with the media, he listed physical fitness, education, integrity, and quality family time among his personal priorities.

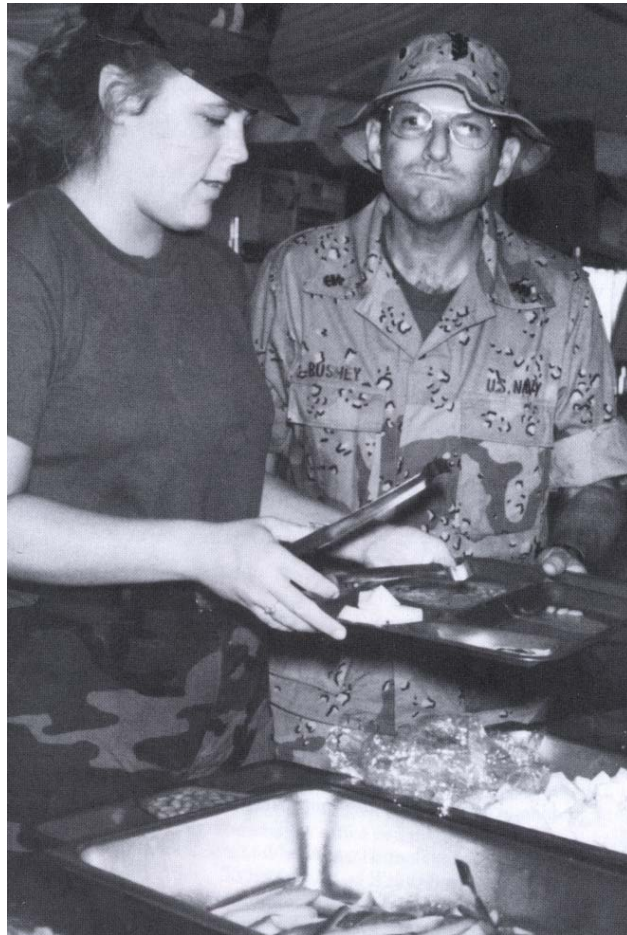
He promised to support family programs already in place, to put continuing emphasis on the need for child care facilities, and to place more emphasis on financial planning to help sailors balance their checkbooks. Before taking office, he advocated the use of Direct Deposit System (DDS) in a video for the Navy Accounting and Finance Center.

A CNO’S Assessment

On September 9, Bushey relieved Plackett in formal ceremonies held at the Washington Navy Yard. Admiral Trost was the guest speaker. Prior to presenting the Distinguished Service Medal to the outgoing MCPON and welcoming the new one, the CNO spoke of the billet that had been created in 1967.

“In my judgment,” he said, “it would be hard to overstate the importance of the decision in 1967 to designate the Navy’s top enlisted sailor and assign him or her to the staff of the Chief of Naval Operations as a key advisor. For what this billet is all about is leadership. Leadership of a group of people found in no other walk of life, a group of people whose contributions and

His sense of humor makes him accessible to all ranks; here MCPON Bushey asks for a second helping of field chow.



sacrifices deserve the very best leadership that our service and indeed our country can provide.

“To be a good leader, to give the kind of leadership that this demanding service requires of us, we need to be proactive. We need to be aware of potential problems before they become real problems. We need to address ourselves to causes and not just to symptoms of causes. We need to be wise, knowledgeable, and farsighted...and then we need to handle all the emergent problems anyway.

“What we find is that no matter how much wisdom, knowledge, and farsightedness we possess, we cannot lead alone. No matter what we think is the reality of a situation, there is probably another reality on the deck plates, and our people need and deserve leaders who know what that reality is. The way we do that is first, to get out on the deck plates ourselves and see what is going on; and second, to have people, at all levels of command, who are, by whatever term we use, the chiefs of the boat who can take the pulse of the command and give us the straight information, perhaps better than we can get it for ourselves.

“The Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, like his counterparts in hundreds of Navy commands around the world, is chartered to observe and act, not to supersede the regular chain of command, but to strengthen it and make it work better. His or hers are the experienced eyes that can see the reality of the deck plates. His or hers is the persuasive, tactful voice that can give just the right encouraging word to junior or senior alike, that will turn a potential problem into a working solution. Indeed, he or she is the pulse-taker of the command.”

“Speak the Truth”

The new MCPON made a commitment to himself and to the enlisted community to “speak the truth.”

“I hope people will learn that I’m going to be honest with them,” he said in his first interview with *All Hands*. “I’m not going to try to build false hopes. I believe sailors will do anything in the world for you, as long as they know why they’re doing it.”

Bushey also promised to listen more than he talked when visiting with sailors.

“God gave me one mouth and two ears,” he said. “I should do twice as much listening as talking, and that’ll be my priority.”

Bushey used the term “preventive maintenance” to describe his role in protecting people programs already in place. He found himself in good company. Bushey was impressed with the concern that the Navy’s senior leadership had for sailors.

“In every issue that comes up, they say, ‘How is that going to impact the people?’” he told the editor of *NAVALOG* at Newport, Rhode Island.

New CNP

Soon after the announcement of Bushey's selection was made, the Navy also announced that Vice Admiral Jeremy "Mike" Boorda had relieved Vice Admiral Leon Edney as Chief of Naval Personnel. Vice Admiral Edney became the VCNO.

As a former enlisted man, Vice Admiral Boorda brought a unique perspective to his new job.

"My real goal is to improve Navy readiness by making people feel good about what they do and having the term 'The Navy Takes Care of It's Own' really mean something. There's a whole bunch of things to do that," he told reporters during a press conference shortly after taking office. He emphasized the need to treat people as individuals and to talk straight in an "understandable way." He was not interested, he said, in making his job or the job of people in the personnel business any easier.

"If our job gets harder because we have to do more for the rest of the Navy, so be it," he said. "I hope that when my time as CNP is over, someone will be able to say, 'Hey, that guy really cared about sailors and everything he did had that focus.'"

Bushey found that his goals and those of Vice Admiral Boorda were closely linked.

"I feel very close, very personal with Vice Admiral Boorda," Bushey told *Sea Services Weekly* within weeks of becoming MCPON. "He has told me that his door is open to me at any time. I have priority because I represent the enlisted community. He is very sincere about doing what we can for the troops. I feel that I can go in and say things are screwed up and why, and he will listen to me. He may not always agree with me, but God forbid that everyone agree with me all of the time!"

Bushey also found a strong ally in the CNO.

"I feel very comfortable with Admiral Trost. I can be straight-forward with him - I don't have to sugar-coat things. He appreciates honesty and has a deep and sincere concern for the welfare of our sailors."

Family support programs, such as family service centers, family advocacy, the ombudsman program, and child care had become an integral part of Navy leaders commitment to quality of life. "The focus of my intentions for the next three years will be our sailors and their families," Bushey said. "Anything the Navy policy-makers, Congress and my office can do to improve the work and home situations of our sailors is where my attentions and efforts will be."

On November 28, 1988, MCPON and Mrs. Bushey attended a two-day Navy-Marine Corps Family Support Conference in Norfolk. Like the one held in 1978, the conference provided a forum for establishing goals, directions and strategies for the future of family support programs in the Navy and Marine

Corps. Over 1200 people attended, including flag officers, senior enlisted leaders, government officials, family support program managers, counselors, and civilian resource representatives.

The MCPON served as moderator for a discussion group that examined the needs of single sailors and how family service centers could meet those needs. Not surprisingly, the word “family” emerged as the primary reason that single sailors don’t look to family service centers as a resource. The group submitted recommendations for improving that image and suggested services that would be more realistic for the single sailor. Recommendations included providing storage space for sailors leaving on deployment and a volunteer referral service for single sailors with time on their hands.

In *Military Family*, a newspaper for military members and their families, Bushey said he felt the significance of the conference was in the show of “strong interest in taking care of our people.”

Hectic Pace

During his first four months in office, Bushey set a hectic pace. On the road, he visited with sailors on the East, West, and Gulf Coasts, inland at Millington, Tennessee, Albuquerque, New Mexico, and El Paso, Texas. In December, he and Mrs. Bushey made an 18-day WestPac tour with stops in Hawaii, Guam, Tokyo, Yokosuka, Atsugi, Japan and Seoul, Korea.

In Washington, he began working issues such as the High Year Tenure (HYT) policy, the recently introduced peer ranking system for enlisted evaluations, and a pending policy statement on fraternization.

With the HYT policy, Bushey picked up the revised policy where Plackett had left it. The battle was not yet won but Bushey finally succeeded in getting OPNAVINST 1160.5B issued, which established a formal High Year Tenure Selection Board to consider continuation beyond professional growth points.

“We have an instruction, we have the boards established and now we need to follow the rules to make it fair to everyone,” he said in a *Sea Services Weekly* article in February, 1989. “The system has to be equitable in order to allow our young sailors advancement opportunities and that’s where we’re headed right now.”

The policy sets the maximum number of years personnel are allowed to serve by pay grade at: E4-10 years; E5-20 years; E6-23 years; E7-26 years; E8-28 years; E9-30 years. HYT boards, composed of master chiefs, meet quarterly and consider each waiver request on an individual basis. Since 1989, the instruction has been revised to modify eligibility and redesign waiver criteria.

Peer ranking, which requires reporting seniors to rank the top 50 percent of 4.0 performers in pay grades E-6 through E-8, was one of the first issues that Bushey tackled as MCPON. Bushey spent a great deal of time in Washington and

in the fleet clarifying the intent of the policy.

“The purpose of peer ranking is to pick out the cream of the crop,” he explained in one interview, “so you can surface the top ones out. There are many confusions about peer ranking and NMPC and I are working to get the word out to the fleet.”

Three years later, Bushey reports that commanders have learned to use peer ranking to produce more “honest evals.”

The fraternization issue landed on Bushey’s desk shortly after taking office in the form of a proposed instruction. Bushey objected to the wording and made his suggestions for improvement. Pushed by MCPON’s report of concern in the fleet for a policy statement, the recommendation of a Women in the Navy Study Report in 1987, and Congressional pressure, OPNAVINST 5370.2 was finally released in February 1989. In it, fraternization was defined as any personal relationship between an officer and an enlisted member which is unduly familiar and does not respect differences in rank and grade. For the first time in its long history, the Navy had put its custom of frowning on unduly personal relationships among its members, particularly between officer and enlisted, in writing. It also included relationships between senior and junior enlisted, a factor usually overlooked in the traditional policy.

In an interview with *Navy Times* before the instruction was issued, Bushey said he didn’t believe the Navy needed a fraternization instruction.

“It’s just good common sense,” he said. “You don’t mix sexual relationships, or friendly relationships, with work.”

Temporary Halt

On January 29, 1989, Bushey’s own work came to a temporary halt. He was admitted to Bethesda Naval Hospital with a respiratory infection similar to bronchial pneumonia. Though his recovery was more rapid than doctors anticipated, Bushey’s travel schedule was put on hold for the next few weeks.

During his recuperation, on February 13, *Navy Times* ran a cover story on the new MCPON that had a big impact on its readers and helped to build his reputation as a MCPON who “tells it like it is.”

“In his first few months in office,” the article said, “Bushey has stepped on more than a few toes, proving he is not a very political person for someone filling what many fleet sailors see as a very political job.”

A side article in that same issue featured “straight-talk” from the MCPON. On the physical fitness program, he said: “I don’t think we can back off. And there’re some COs that we ought to nail right to the wall. If they’d get off their ass and get on with the program we’d quit killing sailors. We do not take care of our people when it comes to health. We don’t feed them properly. {Congress} says we’ve got to have real butter. We’ve got whole milk. They build our ships

so the only way we can cook things is to deep-fat fry'em or fry'em on a grill. Maybe the young kids can take that; the older people can't."

On retention and quality of life: "Sailors love what they're doing and they will continue to do it as long as they can maintain a decent living. We don't want a Cadillac. We don't want a five-bedroom house with six baths. We want an old Ford pickup truck, we want an average home, and we want to be able to take mother out and do the normal things, go to the movies, have dinner. We've been able to do that, the pay has been O.K."

On the quality of sailors: "You can take all the statistics you want and throw at me. I came from the deck plates, and I can tell you right now that even though we got more high school graduates, I'm getting more and more people that are coming in that can't read. These guys aren't dirtbags because they're Category IVs (CAT IVs). They're CAT IV probably because they can't read. So we set up a good remedial reading program so we can pull those people up, some of them through proper training."

On his own job: "I was appalled that my office had so much power and that people had so much respect for the office that every little single thing I said in that trip report, somebody was calling me up and saying, 'Well, what exactly did you mean by this...because we know the admiral is going to ask questions.'"

In the wake of the article, sailors wrote letters to the *Navy Times* editor praising the new MCPON's courage and willingness to "speak out."

MCPON Bushey's comments on the use of butter in Navy messes and a point paper he submitted to Commander, Naval Supply Systems Command spurred a change to that portion of the Navy Ration Law prohibiting the use of oleomargarine. Effective January 1, 1991, general messes began offering patrons a choice of butter or margarine. Alternate preparation methods to reduce frying, inclusion of fruit, and potato service bars, more fish, poultry, fruit and vegetable recipes are among the "healthy choices" offered to sailors today. The changes were all part of a Navy-wide program to enhance nutrition and weight control.

Additionally, the instruction governing the Navy's health and physical readiness program was revised in 1990. OPNAV Instruction 6110.1D did not change body fat or PRT standards, but established a requirement that officer fitness reports, as well as enlisted evaluations, contain an entry on physical condition. In a February 1990 *Navy Times* article, MCPON Bushey applauded the change, saying that the new rules should help eliminate the enlisted resentment toward the program.

Congressional Testimony

On March 2, 1989, Bushey had sufficiently recovered from his bout with pneumonia to testify with the senior enlisted advisors from the other services before the House Appropriations Committee Military Construction

Subcommittee.

In his statement to the committee, Bushey requested additional funding to alleviate the Navy's 55,000-unit shortage in family housing, to construct more child development centers, and to provide a Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) for sailors in the Continental United States (CONUS) who were struggling to meet the high costs of housing and insurance in heavily populated areas.

A congressmen asked the MCPON if extra funding was available, what would he choose to spend it on? The MCPON answered that he would spend it on Bachelor Enlisted Quarters for single sailors.

Four days after his testimony to Congress, Bushey chaired his first CNO Master Chief Advisory Panel. Like the MCPON, the panel cited living conditions aboard ship and in BEQs as their number one concern.

PRCM Stan Crowley, AirLant Force Master Chief, summed up the panel's feelings during a press conference.

"Our sailors live in less space at sea than that allotted to a felon in a federal penitentiary," he said. "That doesn't bother them. They understand the requirements, the mission and realize that they have to sacrifice something to carry out the important tasks their nation expects of them."

But, the force master chief pointed out, when those sailors come ashore, they expect better living quarters.

"We lose the majority of our single sailors when they come from sea to shore duty," he said, "and we expect them to live in inadequate facilities in poor condition with not much more room than they had at sea. That has to change."

During the five-day session, the panel set stricter guidelines for chief petty officer initiations, made the recommendation that leadership training be made mandatory at some point in a sailor's career, and stressed continued emphasis on tight screening for command master chief selection.

Another concern addressed by the senior enlisted advisors was the 34 percent attrition rate for first-termers. During his briefing to the panel, Vice Admiral Boorda asked for their help in stemming the tide.

"If we keep throwing away about one-third of the sailors that we recruit in the first four years after their enlistment," he said, "given the tough recruiting market and decreasing numbers of enlistment eligibles, we are fighting a losing battle unless we do something to stop the exodus."

The CNP told the panel that the Navy was losing the largest number of first termers in boot camp and "A" school. To target those areas, he liberalized a few policies, such as allowing new recruits with sensitive feet to wear tennis shoes in boot camp instead of the hard sole shoes traditionally required. He pushed for policies in "A" school that gave sailors a second chance or an alternative choice of another "A" school if they were not making passing grades.

Improved training and leadership was the panel's recommendation for reducing the attrition rate.

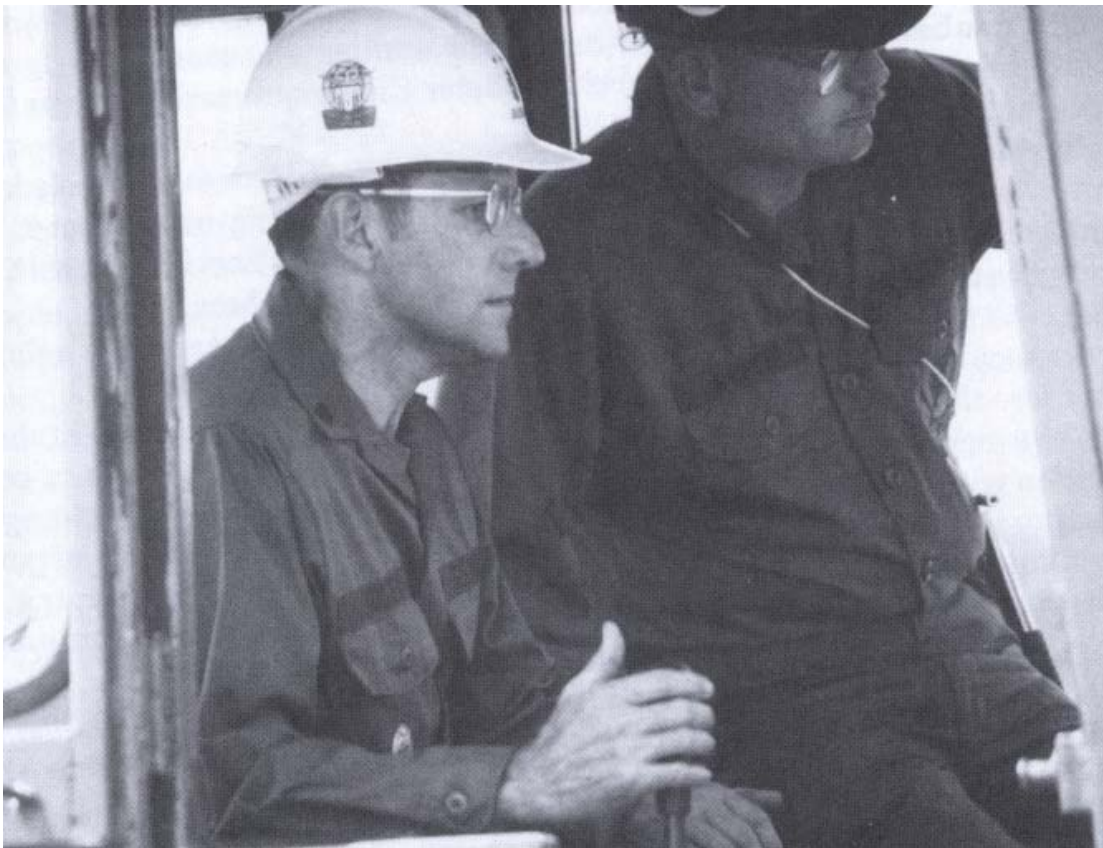
"Attrition and retention are affected very, very much by how good the leadership is, how responsive leadership is to people," Bushey pointed out.

“Leadership is something we need to work on.”

NAYLEAD

By the time the 1990 Spring CNO MCPO Advisory Panel convened, the Navy Leader Development Program (NAVLEAD) had replaced the Leading Petty Officer and Chief Petty Officer Leadership and Management Education and Training courses. One-week courses replaced the two-week LPO and CPO LMET curriculum and attendance was made mandatory for advance-

MCPON Bushey always believed in the Total Force, One Navy concept. During a



drill weekend with a reserve unit, Reserve Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (RNMCB-23) Washington, D.C., the seventh MCPON applied his brand of teamwork.

ment to E-7 and E-8.

To revitalize enlisted leader development at every level of professional

development, indoctrination courses were included for petty officer and chief petty officers.

Also covered by the NAVLEAD umbrella were a command indoctrination program and for the first time, a command master chief course. The student's source book for the C M/C course was written by a number of contributors, including the MCPON, MMCM (SS) Jerry Rose, MMCM(SS) Larry Warthen, ETCM Daryl Johnson, AKCS(AW) Edward Kyle, all active duty members, and DPCM Garfield Anderson and YNC Ronnie McElroy, Naval Reserve.

For the first time since formal leadership development courses were introduced in 1974, the Navy had a comprehensive, training program institutionalizing all leadership courses under one sponsor, the Command Excellence and Leadership Development Division in BUPERS.

Aviation Storekeeper Senior Chief Ted Kyle, head of Enlisted Program Development for the division, praised MCPON Bushey for his concerted effort in getting NAVLEAD off the ground.

"He spent a lot of time reading the material, writing changes, and chopping the final product," Kyle said. "He really pushed it through. It was his recommendation that the curriculum for the CPO course be written by chiefs."

Assisting in the project were EMCM(SS) Winston O. Posey, MMCS(SS) John E. Smith, ATC Gary R. Justice, ETC(SS) Warren C. Scott, YNC Connie S. Terrell, ATC Michael J. Terry, Lt. Wallace H. Lloyd III, and Senior Chief Kyle.

Bushey praised NAVLEAD as a "quantum leap forward" in leadership training.

"I think one of the biggest things I came into town thinking about was that the Navy needed to focus on leadership," he said. "I felt like we had outstanding people in the Navy, but sometimes our focus and directions weren't in the right arena."

Bushey also views NAVLEAD as a positive step in lowering attrition rates. "One of the things that has really helped drive the whole leadership development movement is the attrition," he said, adding that the CNO Master Chief Panel had made many of the recommendations upon which NAVLEAD is based.

"A lot of us feel that good, sensitive leadership can solve some of the attrition problem," he said. "In this technical Navy, we've concentrated so much on teaching people how to be technicians, we forgot that the most complicated equipment we have is people. If I'm having trouble getting you to perform, I can't open a manual and it says, 'OK, to get you to do this, this is what I've got to do.' I can't do that. I've got to learn how to interpret what you're telling me."

A Workaholic

Bushey's schedule in Washington and on the road earned him respect and a reputation as a workaholic. A typical workday in Washington begins at 6 a.m.,

and ends 12 to 14 hours later. On the road, he likes doing “Fun Runs” with sailors for PRT. He has rappelled with the Fleet Marine Force corpsman at Marine Corps Air Station, Cherry Point, N.C., and given blood for Red Cross drives around the world. At Key West, he swam with dolphins in training to help with Navy missions. At Quantico, he drove heavy equipment with Reserve Seabees and at Naval Air Facility, Washington, he flew second seat on a sentimental flight in one of the Navy’s few remaining A-3’s just prior to its retirement.

During one stop on his travelling schedule, Bushey told sailors that he enjoyed getting out of Washington.

“I’m here to get my common sense back,” he said. “The longer you spend in Washington, D.C., the salt leaves your veins.”

In the early months of 1990, Bushey played a key role in controlling the rumors and fears that were created by news reports of impending defense budget cutbacks, changes in homeporting and reductions in force. His message to sailors was that their leaders in Washington were doing everything they could to protect the quality of life programs in existence and to manage cutbacks in end strength without having to tell career minded sailors to go home.

Bushey warned sailors that if they chose to leave the Navy, they should “make sure that is what you want to do.”

“We can’t afford to take you back in,” he said, But he reassured those who wanted to stay in that “normal attrition” and a recruiting decrease would “handle manpower cuts.”

New CNO and a Quick Test

In July, 1990, Admiral Trost was relieved as CNO by Admiral Frank B. Kelso II, former Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet. As a participant in the ceremony held at the Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, Bushey presented the flag to the outgoing CNO.

On August 2, 1990, the All-Volunteer Force was handed its first major test. Iraqi troops and tanks invaded Kuwait and threatened to move into Saudi Arabia. Eight U.S. Navy Middle East Force ships were present in the Persian Gulf. On August 6, the Secretary of Defense received permission to send U.S. warships through the Suez Canal. Within days, the Navy began providing the ships, aircraft and sailors that, along with the other U.S. and Allied armed services, would become the task force for Desert Shield. By January 16, 1991, when Desert Shield became Desert Storm, the Navy had 108 ships and 60,000 personnel in the area.

Three months after the beginning of Desert Storm, with the number of sailors involved in the operation increasing daily, MCPON Bushey flew to the Persian Gulf area to visit with sailors aboard ships, at personnel staging areas, in fleet

hospitals set up in the desert, and with the Marines on the front lines. He heard problems about pay, supplies, the mail, advancement exams, and the lack of recreational outlets. But he also saw high morale everywhere he visited, sailors adapting to longer working hours and a difficult environment, and a heightened state of readiness. By the time he returned to Washington, the problems that he had reported back to his office by phone were well on their way to solutions or were already fixed. Some problems, however, like slow mail delivery would take time and were never completely resolved. But his visit reassured sailors in the area that someone in Washington was listening.

Throughout the force buildup and the hostilities, Bushey continued to travel around the fleet, telling sailors at Submarine Base Bangor, Washington, on the eve of Desert Storm, that he had considered cancelling his trip due to the war, but that he had decided it was important to “come out and talk to sailors about continuing to work on the future.” He carried



Dateline. ..Riyadh. MCPON flew to the Gulf to join the ground troops from Desert Shield/Desert Storm at Fleet Hospital Five In November, 1990.

reassurances from Washington that as soon as possible, operations tempo would return to six-month maximum deployments, that quality of life programs would receive increased attention from legislatures in the wake of Desert Storm, and that pending force reductions did not mean good sailors would be told to go

home.

“There are a lot of good things that come out of getting smaller,” he was quoted in the Yorktown Naval Weapons Station newspaper, *The Booster*. “We’re fortunate that we don’t have to take the cuts right now that some of the services are going to have to take. We’ve been able to program out into the future, so we’re going to be able to do it without hurting people. We’re not going to be using severance pay because we’re not going to RIF people.”

When the war ended, Bushey sent a congratulatory message to those who participated and to those who supported the effort.

“You validated our principles of training and leadership, and our tradition of pride and professionalism,” he said. As part of the combined effort by the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard, both Active and Reserve, you set new standards in cooperation, mutual respect and commitment. Well done.”

Going for Four

In November 1990, prior to his trip to the Gulf area, Bushey announced via Navy Editor Service his decision to stay an extra year at the request of the CNO. His decision marked the first time in over ten years that a MCPON would do a four-year tour.

“I needed the CNO to want me to work for him and he asked me to do that,” Bushey said. “I also needed the support of the fleet and force master chiefs.” He also consulted with each of the former MCPONs before making his decision.

“They supported me 100 percent and thought I was doing a good job,” he said. “However, they thought I was crazy. Physically, it’s a killer to do four years. Bob Walker, the last guy to do four years, talked to me quite a bit about how tired he was that last year and how difficult it was at times.”

He cited the support he was receiving from the CNO, CNP and “all of OPNAV and NMPC” as a factor in his decision.

“It just makes my job less stressful...to have policy makers who care,” he said. “Not that all ideas I come up with or suggestions I make work or even fit, it’s the way they’re handled and treated - kind of a fearless environment.”

Under CNO Admiral Kelso, a “fearless environment” has become the goal of the future as the Navy moves toward Total Quality Leadership (TQL).

“It’s the ability to create an atmosphere where the employee doesn’t fear being part of the solution,” Bushey explained, “where the individuals all the way from the bottom to the top can work jointly on trying to make things a little bit better - no fear of ideas, no fear of trying things. It’s really just listening and doing what is right.”

Although the advent of TQL and the support he was receiving all gave Bushey good reasons to stay for an extra year, he admitted that he had to undergo “self evaluation” before reaching his final decision.

“I was a little bit scared that I had or would change,” he said. “I want to make sure that I can still live with who I am. I think it could be very, very easy to sit in this job and lose your sense of humor and start thinking you know all the answers to get caught up in yourself. My job is to represent the deck plate sailor. I would quit today if I thought Duane Bushey is ever going to forget he’s Duane Bushey. He’s a farmer from Maryland and a guy that likes ships and going to sea and airplanes and sailors, and if he ever got caught up in the royalty end of it I guess I’d hope somebody would say, ‘Hey, you’re out of here.’”

Bushey continues to push for the quality of life programs he came into office hoping to improve. Adequate housing for married and single sailors is still a priority, along with fair and equal treatment for all sailors. He is at the forefront of an effort to convince Congress to give Filipino sailors citizenship after a 12-year period of good and honorable service. He advocates increased opportunities for advancement for women in the Navy and continues to stress the need for mutual respect among men and women in the workplace. He continues to be vocal in his support of the Navy’s policy on child care, while maintaining that parents, single or married, should shoulder the responsibility of child-rearing.

After three years in office, Bushey can look back and see things that have changed for the better. He was successful in getting evaluations of E-9s reinstituted and in getting the authority for signing evaluations extended to CPOs. He is proud of his role in establishing a “make up” board for qualified sailors who were inadvertently overlooked by the chief’s selection board. He was also instrumental in paring down the CNO MCPO Advisory Panel by eliminating the CNET fleet master chief position and reducing some force billets to a CNO-directed Command Master Chief. Another area of change has been in the traditional rite of passage to chief petty officers. Based on recommendations from the Advisory Panel, Bushey issued stricter guidelines on the conduct of chief initiations by limiting the preparation time and restricting harassment to off-duty hours and the CPO mess.

Bushey is disappointed in other areas, however. Variable Housing Allowance (VI-LA) problems still persist, sailors on tenders are still not receiving sea pay, and shipboard habitability is still a negative in quality of life initiatives. Like his predecessors, he has learned that major changes and improvements take a great deal of work, attention, and patience. Overall, he said, things have gone better than he anticipated.

“I guess I’ve been kind of surprised with how easy it’s been at times to make changes. I thought it would be tougher. I think that’s a part of the system that’s in now; I don’t think it’s always been that way. I’m not sure all of my predecessors could say that.”

As he enters his fourth and final year, Bushey remains upbeat and positive. “I get up in the morning and I’m still excited about coming to work. I still wake up in the middle of the night thinking about things, wanting to do things. I think I still have a lot to contribute and we’ve got a lot of good things started and going and I’d just love to see them through.”



MCPON Bushey (center) flanked by members of the Fleet and Force MCPO Advisory Panel on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the Panel in November 91.

The Rest of the Team:

Spouses, Staff, and Friends

To a man, the seven Master Chief Petty Officers of the Navy have given the lion's share of credit for their success to others.

They praise their wives and families for the sacrifices they made; the members of their staff for hard work and loyalty; the leaders for support and concern; their shipmates for honesty and faith.

Like the proverbial snowball, as the office gained momentum and grew with increasing responsibility, a team effort was required to keep it rolling. While many more than those named in the following pages were members of that team, and were equally worthy of mention, the focus is necessarily limited to a few key players.

The Ladies

If the Navy's enlisted men suffered from a lack of status and prestige prior to 1967, their wives suffered more.

Traditionally silenced by the pronouncement that if the Navy had wanted a sailor to have a wife, he would have been issued one in his seabag; wives were either considered excess baggage or silent partners to a man's career.

On August 21, 1970, MCPON Black took the Navy to task for a practice he considered demeaning to enlisted wives. "Eliminate usage of the term 'officers and their ladies and enlisted men and their wives,'" he wrote in his response to Admiral Elmo Zumwalt's request for input to a Z-gram eliminating "Mickey Mouse" policies.

The CNO chose not to take action on Black's recommendation.

"I was pretty sure that by now most commanding officers had dropped this ungracious distinction without being ordered to," he wrote in his book, *On Watch*.

Ima Black chafed under the restrictions placed on her as a dependent wife and even more so when her husband became the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy. Outspoken and opinionated, she saw tremendous potential for extending to Navy wives a communication link similar to that offered to sailors.

"I wanted to do something," she said, recalling her frustration. "I was there and I was available and I couldn't even travel with him. There were times he flew in a military plane, with a vacant seat by him, but they still wouldn't let me go."

Even when the MCPON's primary mission was to attend a wives' club

function, his wife was not authorized to travel with him.

"There was one time he was flying on a military plane, with the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, to a wives club on the west coast," she said. "It was a woman's thing and he asked if I could go. They said they couldn't justify me

flying in that plane that wouldn't have cost anybody one penny. This was frustrating. There was a lot I wanted to do. But I was never accepted as anything more than his wife. A dependent." But her husband listened to her and quickly discovered that having four ears and eyes to hear and see was better than two.

"I didn't try to dictate to him," she explained, "but often when I was with him in a large gathering in Washington, I would see or hear things that he couldn't. People would come to me and say, 'Your husband is so busy, I can't talk to him but I've got this problem.' And they would tell me. Often the younger enlisted people were intimidated by him because of his position. They just wouldn't come up and talk to him but they would talk to me more freely. I would see a lot of things and call it to his attention because some admiral would have him off in a corner somewhere."

She also made a special effort to rescue him when he was 'cornered by officers.'

"I would go over and very gently tug him away from the officers, tell him he had a phone call or something and get him over to the enlisted people," she said.

It wasn't until Black's last official trip as MCPON that they were able to receive funding for Mrs. Black to travel with him.

"That was when the Navy began turning around and recognizing that the family is also a part of the Navy," Ima Black said. When MCPON Whittet came into office, his wife, Helen, had closer contact with Admiral Zumwalt and his wife, Mouza, through the close friendship that developed between the new MCPON and the CNO. The Admiral asked for her input on matters concerning Navy wives and authorized her to travel with her husband to attend Navy Wives' Club meetings, gatherings with chiefs' wives, and to talk with other wives of enlisted men.

When homeports began opening in Greece and Turkey, the CNO asked Helen to visit the bases to get a woman's perspective on living conditions there for families.

Mrs. Zumwalt included Helen in social functions such as teas and coffees. "The line between officers and enlisted was beginning to fade," Helen said in a phone interview from her home in Coronado, California. "Admiral Zumwalt wanted people to respect each other and communicate freely."

When the CNO created the wives' ombudsman program, though it would take years to develop and gain the necessary support, a signal was sent throughout the enlisted community: the Navy had a leader who cared about families. Wives may not have been issued in a seabag but they were finally being recognized as key factors in a married sailor's choice to stay or get out of the Navy.

The role of the MCPON's wife evolved over the next 20 years with the

changing philosophies of Navy leaders toward families and with lifestyle changes within the families themselves. As more and more wives moved out of the home and into the workplace, the Navy began looking for ways to fill



In 1979, CNO Hayward found a willing and capable assistant in Carol Crow. Tasked as unofficial ombudsman, she traveled extensively with MCPON Crow and reported her findings to CNO and CNP.

the void in the counseling, problem-solving, child-care, and referral systems that home-bound wives once provided to each other. Traditional benefits for dependents such as medical care, Navy exchanges, commissaries, recreational facilities, and housing gained new emphasis and required frequent quality checks.

While a sailor's morale was viewed as an indicator of job satisfaction, a

Navy wife's morale was a better gauge of the overall factors affecting that sailor's quality of life. Once committed to improving those factors, the Navy began building or strengthening the necessary tools. Since the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy was already working the issues from the Navy member's perspective, it was only a matter of time before his wife would be asked to do the same from a Navy spouse's point of view...on a volunteer basis.

When Fran Walker came to Washington with her husband, she chose to support him on the homefront. She was not asked to travel with him or play a role as ombudsman. During Bob Walker's tenure, the Navy leadership was looking internally, concentrating on bringing stability to leadership and trying to adapt to the changes that Admiral Zumwalt's tenure had introduced and to societal changes as well.

But, in 1978, near the end of Walker's term, an event took place that set the ground rules for the Navy's emerging role in family support. The first Navy Family Support Conference was held in Norfolk, Virginia. The MCPON and his wife were introduced among the honored guests. As the result of the conference, a flag level steering group was established to oversee a Family Support Program and funding for a network of family service centers.

Also in 1978, Admiral Thomas B. Hayward became Chief of Naval Operations. His goal to put "Pride and Professionalism" back in the Navy included programs to put family support into the mainstream of Navy personnel policies. In 1979, when MCPON Crow came into office, the CNO found a willing and capable assistant in Carol Crow.

On the road with her husband, Carol's schedule was separate from his, allowing her to spend time with Navy wives' groups, touring commissaries, exchanges, medical facilities, and Navy family service centers, where available. Her message to wives struggling to make ends meet on a sailor's paycheck was one of encouragement and gentle advice. She urged wives to use whatever resources were available to them, including food stamps. She also pushed for wives to register to vote and to encourage their husbands to do the same.

She relayed their concerns to her husband and to the CNO and CNP. Tasked as an unofficial ombudsman, her perspective was sought by other flag officers in charge of family-oriented services. And, she made it clear that an ombudsman should be the wife of a senior enlisted man, not an officer's wife.

"When I would visit a command, there would be officers' wives who came to our meetings," Carol said. "They wanted to know what was going on in Washington, too. But I strongly believe that a separation exists between officers and enlisted and that enlisted wives are more intimidated by officers' wives. That's why it's important that an ombudsman be the wife of a chief, senior chief or master chief."

The Crows were aware that not everyone in Washington or in the fleet approved of her role and there were some who resented her freedom to travel with the MCPON.

"If someone said something to my husband about my travel," Carol said, "he

told them to go see the CNO.”

During a visit with wives at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, the command master chief publicly criticized Carol for her active role.

“He told me that if I would stay home, sailors families would get more money,” she said. “One of the wives in the group spoke up and said they were grateful that I was allowed to come see them and that any savings would be negligible in comparison to the assistance I provided.”

When Billy Sanders became MCPON, his wife, Mozelle, did not take as active a role as Carol. A gentle, soft spoken woman, she set her own pace, accompanying her husband on several trips overseas and CONUS, acting as a sounding board more than a spokesperson. While Sanders said he received positive feedback from his wife’s visits with other Navy wives, he said she was not comfortable speaking to large groups.

“I was happy that ‘Mo’ did as much as she did,” Sanders said. “Our daughter was still a teenager and she and her mom were very close. While I give a lot of credit to the MCPON wives who have chosen a higher degree of involvement, I believe that should remain an individual choice and certainly should not have a bearing on the selection process.” MCPON Bill Plackett came into office with definite ideas about the role his wife, Karen, would play.

“The MCPON’s wife plays just as important a role as he does,” he said in an interview with a Norfolk paper.

To prepare herself for the role, Karen Plackett spent the first few days after her husband moved into the MCPON office going through briefings with people from housing, medical, and the family support programs.

“It made me understand what has to happen before improvements can be made,” she said, “and I was able to explain the system to the wives when I talked to them.”

Like Carol Crow, Karen enjoyed travelling with her husband and took her role as his “second set of ears and eyes” seriously. She accompanied her husband on 45 percent of his road trips, and began to build her own credibility. During her visits, she learned to follow her husband’s advice to “sift through the sand” to find the “big picture” problems that could be addressed at the Washington level.

In one instance, at a small base in Japan, she was bombarded with complaints and problems from angry wives during a meeting. Quickly realizing that the majority of the complaints could and should have been handled on a local level, she sent for the command master chief who was in a meeting with the MCPON.

“When he came in, he said, ‘I sure as hell hope this is important!’ I told him he needed to have a town meeting to let the people air their grievances,” she said. “He listened to the wives and went to the CO. They had a meeting and 50 percent of the problems were considered important and were corrected. The other 50 percent were just petty complaints. But the problem was the command master chief had not been in touch with his people.”

In Washington, Karen filled out trip reports similar to her husband’s and briefed the CNO and the CNP when requested. Her input was sought from

numerous other departments as well.

For a brief time, she sat on a committee formed by Mrs. Joanne Webb, the wife of Secretary of the Navy James H. Webb, Jr., to seek alternate means of supporting child care and family advocacy programs. On the committee were millionaires, retired flag officers, a DOD housing director, and representatives from family support programs. A lawyer provided legal counsel on the legitimacy of proposed actions.

“When Mr. Webb left the office of SECNAV, the committee stopped meeting,” Karen said, “but as a member, it opened a lot of doors for me. I could talk to people that Bill couldn’t.”

One of her primary contacts for dealing with family concerns was Ms. Alice Stratton, Under Secretary for Family and Health Matters.

Karen’s credibility grew to the point that commands would call and ask for her to visit...without her husband. Until she received official recognition as the Navy’s Ombudsman-at-large in 1988, she was not authorized to travel alone.

She sat on the Navy Relief Board as a working member, helping to draw up policies and providing a Navy wife’s view. She also made it a point to visit Navy Relief offices wherever she traveled and reported her findings back to the board.

Karen became one of the first enlisted wives to serve as an Arlington Lady, a group of volunteers who represent the Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of Naval District Washington at funerals for Navy veterans in Arlington National Cemetery.

“You are representing the Navy to the spouses or family members of the deceased,” she said. “Sometimes you would be the only one there besides the widow and the chaplain. I remember one lady who told me that she could not believe that I would take time out of my day to be there with her.”

While some of the services send the wife of their senior enlisted advisor to etiquette school after the selection, Karen said she had to learn much of it on her own.

“Mrs. Sheila Watkins (wife of CNO Admiral James Watkins) and Mrs. Pauline Trost (wife of CNO Admiral C.A. H. Trost) helped introduce me to the Washington scene,” she said. “The first time I was invited by Mrs. Watkins for coffee with a large group, she told me I could pour for her. That scared me because I could see myself spilling it all over. But they taught me a lot.”

The two Fleet and Force Spouse Conferences, hosted by Karen in conjunction with the Fall CNO MCPO Advisory Panel, was, in her opinion, highly successful. One of the recommendations the group made to the CNO was to allow E-3s and below access to the housing list.

“At first, the CNO opposed it, but two years later, he finally put out a message that COs could add them to the housing list if the need and the availability was there,” she said. “That was one of the major concerns those wives were hearing from the junior enlisted who already had one or two children and couldn’t afford off-base housing. We also pushed for a family advocacy program.”

Karen feels very strongly that the wives of the fleet, force and command master chiefs are capable of taking on a greater role in helping and overseeing Navy family programs. She also believes that the next decade should be a time for tremendous growth in the family support arena.

“Wives need to stand up and make a lot of noise,” she points out. “They need to remind Navy leaders that we are here! It shouldn’t be hateful noise but we can’t allow our progress to slip. There is much more that needs to be done. But we also need to remember that Navy families don’t need to be led by the hand. They need to be shown the direction and then let them make their own way. And we also need to be careful not to get dragged down by the families that are always in trouble. They will drain the system. We need to have programs for the families who are functioning well but could use help every now and then.”

On October 13, 1987, the Navy’s birthday, Karen accompanied her husband to the dedication of the Lone Sailor statue at the Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C.

“That was a very special moment for both of us that day,” she said. “As the MCPON, he was a guest speaker. He was so nervous but as he began to speak, I realized that he was speaking from his heart. That Lone Sailor statue symbolized a great deal to both of us, the pride in being a sailor, the loneliness experienced by the sailor and his family during separations, and the quiet sense of duty we as a Navy family feel for our country. For me and him both, it was very emotional and remains a highlight in his career and his time in office.”

When her husband retired, Karen Plackett, a mother of four, received the Distinguished Public Service Award signed by the Secretary of the Navy William L. Ball III, for her work with Navy families.

“My time as wife of the MCPON was the most wonderful, frustrating time of my life,” she said. “If I could advise another Navy wife on what to do to prepare herself in the event that her husband becomes MCPON someday, I would tell her to learn everything she can about the Navy, be an ombudsman if it’s available and mostly, just be a good Navy wife. You learn a lot from just experiencing that.”

Sue Bushey agrees. She hasn’t forgotten the lean days when her husband was a third class petty officer.

“He led me to believe that it was necessary to split a popsicle and we both got a stick,” she said. “We went to the movies on base...cost us 10 cents apiece.”

She learned to pinch pennies as an alternative to working outside the home so she could stay home with the children. Because of those experiences, she finds it easy to relate to the wives of junior enlisted men as she travels with the MCPON.

Additional training for the job as ombudsman-at-large came from ombudsman training when her husband first served as a command senior chief. In 1980, while her husband attended the Sergeants Major Academy, she enrolled in El Paso Community College and with a combination of CLEP credits, correspondence courses, and transferable credits, she earned her associate’s degree in 1981. When the family returned to Norfolk, Virginia, Susan enrolled in

Norfolk State University as a psychology major. To meet course requirements, she worked as a counselor at a shelter for battered spouses and as a counselor at a rape crisis center in Norfolk. In 1985, she graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor's degree in psychology and became a salaried employee at the center.

"It was very intense," she said. "I had to take my beeper everywhere, even to church."

One night, when her beeper interrupted a cozy and rare dinner-for-two, her husband, who was C M/C of *Theodore Roosevelt*, loudly protested the intrusion until he discovered that one of his sailors was involved. Dinner was placed on indefinite hold.

Susan's career went on hold in 1988 when her husband was selected as the seventh MCPON.

"I feel the Navy gets two for the price of one," she told a *Navy Times* reporter five months into the job as ombudsman-at-large.

In one of her early trip reports following visits to European commands, she noted "a need for a counselor to be sent on a regular basis to isolated areas to relieve counseling load; increased funding and staffing at overseas Navy family service centers; and increased emphasis on spouse employment."

Like Karen Plackett, Susan learned quickly to "sift through the sand." In an ombudsman newsletter article, she explained the process: "The visits and briefings I receive are very helpful to me in writing my trip report when I return, but the most vital part of seeing a base and trying to get an accurate feel for how our families live is something called 'reality testing.' After all the base tours are completed, or maybe in the midst of them, I will invariably be given the opportunity to meet with some of the ombudsmen in a group setting. This is my chance to not only hear their concerns about their areas, but also to test what I have been told about the family support services on the base. Many times the information does not coincide, and the truth lies somewhere in between!"

Susan's interest in family advocacy has gone beyond her role as Navy ombudsman-at-large. In 1990, she became the first enlisted wife to serve as the president of the National Military Family Association (NMFA), the only organization at a national level dedicated to identifying and resolving issues of concern to military families. Current issues include child care, the commissary system, compensation equity, education including DOD Dependents Schools (DODDS), former spouse equity, health care, housing, relocation, spouse employment, voting, and others.

NMFA is an independent, nonprofit organization, staffed primarily by volunteers and financed by tax-deductible dues and donations.

When her husband retires in August 1992, ten years later than he promised, Susan says she is looking forward to moving back to the home they left in Norfolk and continuing her career.



On the road again with MCPON-7...As Ombudsman-at-Large, Sue Bushey's travel itinerary was as hectic as her husband's.

"Not everybody is cut out to be a Navy wife," she said. "One of the most important words in a Navy wife's vocabulary is 'flexibility.'"

The Staff

The majority of the sailors who have worked with the MCPONs over the past 25 years have been yeomen and journalists, hand picked by the MCPONs or recommended by detailers for the job.

Their role of providing administrative or public affairs support to the MCPONs is a full-time job in itself, but the staff also spends a great deal of time responding to queries from the fleet. Responses range from providing a correct

phone number to time-consuming cases that require research, problem-solving, and follow-up.

The MCPON's administrative assistant, originally an E-7 billet, has been filled for the past 14 years by an E-9. Those who have held the position had a well-rounded background reflecting a broad Navy perspective, a demonstrated concern for sailors and the ability to communicate effectively with officers as well as enlisted.

As a primary advisor to the MCPON, the administrative assistant plays a key role in the development of personnel related policies and programs. In the absence of the MCPON, the assistant may interpret, define and articulate policy issues for the fleet, force, and command master chief network. The degree of trust and understanding between the MCPON and his assistant determines the scope of the latter's role. At the least, he/she will direct the MCPON's schedule, generate correspondence, coordinate the semi-annual CNO MCPO Advisory Panel, supervise the staff, and keep the lines of communication open between the fleet and the myriad of contacts in BUPERS and OPNAV. One of their most difficult tasks, screening the MCPON from countless interruptions, requires tact and diplomacy. While it is necessary to maintain the MCPON's availability to visitors, the administrative assistant must balance that need with the MCPON's need to address the innumerable issues that land daily on his desk.

While most of the MCPONs selected their own assistant, two stayed on to serve a successor. Chief Yeoman Jerry J. Sharf was Black's assistant until he was relieved by Chief Yeoman Jerome D. Traver. When Whittet came into office, Traver remained until he was relieved by YNC Bob Ferris. Chief Yeoman Bob Saverling served four years with Walker. Master Chief Yeoman Darrell Bashor went three years with Crow. Master Chief Yeoman Tim Brady served with Sanders until 1985 when he was relieved by Master Chief Cryptologic Technician (Administration) George "Dave" Monroe. Monroe stayed on to serve Plackett for the duration of his tenure. Master Chief Personnelman Karl Braley came in with Bushey from *Theodore Roosevelt* and served until December 1990. Master Chief Yeoman Bill Huesmann currently serves as the MCPON's assistant.

A journalist is assigned to the MCPON to provide public affairs assistance and guidance. Second Class Journalist Fred Szydluk served with Black; JO2 Steve Maddox with Whittet; JO2 Dale Hewey, JO1 Ron L. Pulliam and JO1 Mark Malinowski each served a tour with Walker; Malinowski and JO1 Don Phelps served with Crow; Phelps with Sanders; JO1 Ron Ostarello and JOC Anita Westervelt, with Plackett; and Westervelt and JOC Craig Grisoli with Bushey. Administrative support for the office has been provided by second and first class yeomen who process and file the major share of the incoming and outgoing correspondence. For these young people, working with the MCPON meant long hours but it provided them with a unique perspective of Navy life and valuable hands-on training in their rating.

Yeoman Second Class Thomas E. Gould served MCPON Black during his

final years in office; YN2 Barbara Williams, YN2 Bob Abbott, and YN2 Catalina Lopez served with Whittet; YN2 Lorraine O'Brien with Walker; YN3 Kathy Chochol with Crow; YN3 Margarita Santana with Sanders; YN2 Rich Chabot with Plackett; and YN2 David Haldiman and YN3 Jean Klosek with Bushey.

In 1985, when MCPON Plackett moved the Sailor of the Year program to his office, the Shore Sailor of the Year was given the option of serving a year with the MCPON to coordinate the program and work special cases. Those who served during Plackett's tenure were Chief Aviation Machinist's Mate Kurt Schaedel, Chief Quartermaster Keith T. Williams and Chief Aviation Antisubmarine Warfare Technician John S. Visosky. With Bushey were Chief Aviation Structural Mechanic Beth Blevins, Chief Aviation Machinist's Mate Jamie Murphy, Chief Aviation Antisubmarine Warfare Operator George

Heider, and Chief Aircrew Survival Equipmentman Julie Chorlton. Through the years, the staff for the MCPON has also benefited from the support of civilian and Reserve personnel. MCPON Black received clerical support from Mrs. Carolyn D. Reese, the only Civil Service clerk to work for a MCPON. During MCPON Crow's tenure, he was asked by the Naval Reserve Force Master Chief to include a Reserve member on his staff. YN1 Keith Hughes, USNR, Training and Administration of Reserves (TAR) was selected to serve in the office during Crow's final two years. Other Reservists, on Temporary Active Duty (TEMAC) have served for short periods of time in the office to assist in various programs and projects.

The customer-oriented nature of the MCPON office requires high moral, ethical and professional standards from those who serve in it. Like their boss, staff members must be willing to go the extra mile for shipmates they may never meet or hear from again. The reward for the job they do is the rare but special moment when a sailor they were able to help stops in to say thanks.

The Other Master Chiefs

Twice a year, the Navy's top master chiefs arrive in Washington, D.C., with their own agendas and opinions on what needs to be done to make life better for their sailors.

On some issues, they argue heatedly, tempers flare, toes get stepped on. Sometimes, the MCPON has to restore order.

But these master chiefs don't tread lightly. As members of the Chief of Naval Operations Master Chief Petty Officer Advisory Panel, it is their job to speak out on the issues that concern the sailors they represent.

And the leaders in Washington listen. Since 1971, when the first CNO MCPO Advisory panel was convened, it has served as the center of a two-way communication system that filters information from the sailors in the fleet to Type and Fleet Commanders, the CNO, the CNP, and the MCPON and back

down again.

If chief petty officers are, as they say, the backbone of the Navy, then the master chiefs who serve on the panel are collectively the Navy's spinal cord.

While the structure of the panel has changed through the years, from as many as 23 members during MCPON Whittet's tenure, to the current 12 voting members, the mission has remained the same. In a July 1971 issue of *All Hands Magazine*, Whittet outlined his charge to the panel: "These symposiums would be for the purpose of stimulating discussion and exchanging ideas on topics of interest to the Navy's enlisted personnel, as well as to provide a wide-based source of recommendations and suggestions from the fleet to the CNO."

They were called Master Chief Petty Officers of the Command (MCPOC) in 1971, selected by fleet, type, or force commanders to serve as the Senior Enlisted Advisor on their staff. During MCPON Walker's tenure, he changed the name to Fleet, Force, and Command Master Chiefs and began efforts to whittle down the number of panel members.

During MCPON Sanders' term, approval was given by the CNO to limit the number of panel members brought to Washington while allowing type commanders to retain the title of Force Master Chief for their senior enlisted advisor. It wasn't until 1989 that a major restructuring change was announced, cutting the number of fleet master chiefs to three, and force master chiefs to nine. Incumbents were allowed to serve out their term with the existing title, making the change effective with their successor. Those retaining the fleet titles are Atlantic and Pacific Fleets, and CINCUSNAVEUR. Force titles remain for CNET, BUMED, Naval Reserve, and the Atlantic and Pacific Fleet surface, submarine and air forces. Those losing the force title will remain non-voting, advisory members of the panel as CNO-directed Command Master Chiefs.

As individuals, the fleet, force, and command master chiefs act as an important liaison link in their own chain of command. The master chiefs are able to heighten command awareness of existing or potential situations that may affect welfare, morale, job satisfaction and utilization of enlisted men and women. Commanders have learned to rely upon the advice of the master chiefs when establishing policy or working on problems dealing specifically with enlisted members. They have been, in essence, the forerunner of a Process Action Team (PAT), the heart and soul of the recently introduced TQL program.

Collectively, as the CNO Advisory Panel, they meet for one week in the spring and fall. Prior to arriving in Washington, they solicit and screen point papers from command master chiefs. The ones having merit are brought to Washington and considered by the panel.

The 750 master chiefs who hold billets as command master chiefs and the other chiefs who serve their command in a collateral capacity work with enlisted personnel, providing counsel and rendering assistance where possible. They deal with military matters or personal problems communicated through the chain of command, letters, phone calls, or personal interviews. Through them, the enlisted community and command can exchange feelings, attitudes, and ideas.

The MCPON communicates on a regular basis via phone calls or visits with the master chiefs to keep his finger on the pulse of the enlisted community. They help him pick up on trends and developments that he might not see during his visits to individual commands.

When the Advisory Panel comes to Washington to work issues, they bring a fresh perspective welcomed by the CNO, CNP, and other senior leaders. They represent the Navy-wide network of senior enlisted advisors who are their eyes and ears at small and large commands. The credibility of the panel as a sounding board and a valuable resource for communication and information has ensured its continuation.

A list of issues that have been worked by the panel over the last two decades gives insight into the scope of the senior enlisted advisor's role: uniform changes and guidance, leadership training, educational opportunities, shipboard habitability, living conditions in bachelor enlisted quarters, career opportunities, advancements, evaluations, high year tenure policies, rating mergers, family support programs, pay and compensation, the command master chief program, training programs, recruiting, equal opportunity, women issues, PERS/OP tempo, sea and shore rotation, medical care, retirement benefits, health and fitness, discipline, and drug and alcohol programs.

Issues, like those above, having Navy-wide impact are generally worked through panel action. The master chiefs also consider, collectively or individually, a myriad of other issues that may benefit specific groups, such as colocation detailing for member-to-member couples, dependent day care, and single parents. These issues, combined with cases requiring special consideration for the unique needs of an individual, have been the elements of change on the personnel side of the Navy for the past 25 years.

The experienced eyes and sage advice of senior enlisted advisors have helped Navy leaders focus on those issues needing immediate and long term attention. The value of their input was underscored in November 1991 when former MCPONs Black, Walker, Crow, Sanders and Plackett came to Washington to sit in on the panel. At the end of the week, while all five had words of praise for the panel, it was MCPON Crow who summed it up best:

"We owe so much to these guys," he said. "All of us have so much respect for the job they are doing here and for the job they are doing out in the fleet. It makes you feel good to see the genuine love and concern they have for the sailor out on the deckplates. That's what made this panel work from the beginning and continues to make it work."

People - Not Machines

Back in the '60s and '70s, when the Navy started developing its "people first" philosophies, a great clamor arose from the "old salts" who saw the spectre of crumbling traditions. They shook their heads, pointed their fingers and warned darkly that rough seas lay ahead.

As radical as it may have seemed, the course has proved to be a true one. While there were rough seas as the critics promised, and probably still more to come, the Navy has held steadfastly to its belief that at the core of readiness stand satisfied sailors. It was, after all, a vacuum created by too many unsatisfied sailors leaving the Navy back in the early '60s that set the "winds of change" into motion. What began as a soft, gentle breeze became a gale in the '70s during the Zumwalt era. In rapid fire succession, Z-Grams struck down 'demeaning and abrasive' practices and replaced them with more liberal ones. To many young, junior sailors, Admiral Zumwalt became a hero. To many senior officers and enlisted, Zumwalt's changes challenged the traditional assumption that people would not behave without command-enforced restrictions to hold them in line.

But, Admiral Zumwalt's aim was not to undermine authority but to eliminate practices that caused dissatisfaction and to enforce those that upheld the worth and personal dignity of the individual. The Navy was not alone in its soul searching during the '70s. The other services, reacting to the same external and internal pressures, were beginning to realize that paperwork and rules would not be enough to run an all-volunteer service. Listening and a new awareness of human needs, family considerations, and job satisfaction became important tools for leadership development. Flexibility became the order of the day as new attitudes developed toward regulations and personnel policies formerly viewed as gospel.

By the late '70s, the stabilizing leadership of CNOs Holloway and Hayward brought calmer seas and the opportunity for initiating changes at a more controlled pace. As a result, the Navy rode fairer winds into the '80s.

The new decade ushered in an era of 'Pride and Professionalism.' Time-tested traditions were blended with new ones and good order and discipline were restored with tough "Zero Tolerance" drug policies. Emphasis was placed on developing leadership skills through classroom instruction. The Senior Enlisted Academy (SEA) opened in 1981 for E-8/9s.

Traditional uniforms and grooming standards returned. Training and education became focal points for budget requests and personal excellence programs. Quality of life programs generated support from the Department of Defense level down through the Secretary of the Navy, the Chief of Naval Operations and the Chief of Naval Personnel.

Pay and compensation issues were finally addressed through ample pay

raises and additional benefits such as the variable housing allowance, a respectable sea pay, selective reenlistment bonuses, and overseas cost of living allowances.

The Navy started reducing the costs of permanent change of station orders and stabilizing family life by allowing sailors to “homestead” in one geographical area while serving shore and sea tours. Family separations were limited through tightly controlled deployment schedules. Family Service Centers received funding for proper staffing and increased services. Career counselors were given billets to serve as full-time resources for information and guidance on career choices. Advancement and evaluation policies were revamped to provide realistic opportunities to sailors.

Policies reflecting the changed emphasis from quantity to quality resulted in improved high year tenure boards, petty officer quality control boards and reenlistment criteria. The term “body fat” suddenly gained importance in strict adherence to physical readiness and fitness policies.

Sailors who believed they had been treated unfairly by their chain of command or the bureaucratic system sought recourse through letters to the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, the Chief of Naval Personnel, or their Congressman.

By the end of the decade, policymakers could boast to Congress that retention had increased to 37.4 percent for first termers, 56 percent for second termers and 66.9 percent for careerists. For FY 90, those numbers continued to increase to 38.3, 55.7 and 70.6 percent, respectively.

In his report on the posture and FY 89 budget, Admiral C.A.H. Trost, Chief of Naval Operations, began with the statement that “the Navy today is more ready than ever to fulfill the nation’s commitments and to support our long-standing national security strategy of deterrence, forward defense and alliance solidarity.”

Two years later, Saddam Hussein tested the validity of that statement and lost. During the fast and furious events of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, the Navy’s ships and people passed with flying colors.

“The superb performance of our people and our systems in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm validates the decisions made by our predecessors,” wrote Admiral Trost’s successor, Admiral Frank B. Kelso, II, in an article for the Naval Institute’s *Proceedings*. “There is no better military organization in the world than the U.S. Navy.”

Today, rather than rest on its laurels, the Navy has already set the watch for the future. Total Quality Leadership (TQL), based on the management philosophy of Dr. W. Edwards Deming, is the new wave the Navy will be asked to crest in the 21st Century. The goal is to create a cooperative environment where sailors will work and train under leaders functioning as coaches not judges. Problem-solving will be a programmatic, team effort involving all levels of the command, including policy-makers, operators and those responsible for fleet support.

According to MCPON Duane R. Bushey, who has been on the ground floor of TQL training and development, TQL "has the potential to be the reward the enlisted sailor has earned through years of hard work, sweat, and sacrifice."

"It is the final step in the dramatic leadership evolution that has taken place over the last 25 years," he said. "Through it, our senior enlisted can continue to solve problems on the deck plate, avert disasters on the flight deck, and make life more pleasant on the home front."

Before the exciting promises of the future can be realized, however, geopolitical changes beyond the Navy's control have once again stirred the "winds of change." The revolutionary events in the Soviet Union and the resulting demands for "peace dividends" will mean cutbacks in defense budgets. Already, the Navy is preparing for the possibility of a 400-ship fleet to meet its world-wide commitments. With the prospect of base closures, ship decommissionings and possible cancellation of new ship construction, personnel planners are faced with the task of paring down manpower strength levels.

Ironically, the demands for cutbacks and force reductions have come at a time when the Navy's 25-year investment in personnel policies is paying off handsomely in terms of record-high retention rates, recruitment, and fleet readiness. Now, leaders are faced with the unpleasant task of telling the same sailors they worked so hard to keep, to go home.

In an effort to soften the blow, Navy leadership has initiated policies that will decrease recruiting, limit first term reenlistments, and place greater emphasis on quality rather than quantity through petty officer review boards and high year tenure policies. Qualified career sailors can leave short of retirement with a lump sum alternative based on number of years served. Early out requests up to 90 days are being granted to sailors in overmanned ratings. One year early outs are being granted to crewmembers of decommissioned ships.

As the Navy trims down in personnel and ships, leaders are working hard to ensure that the gains made in quality of life issues over the past 25 years will not be sacrificed. Instead, those issues, such as shipboard habitability, bachelor enlisted quarters, family support systems, housing, and morale and welfare programs, are receiving even greater focus. The core values that helped the Navy restore its pride and professionalism will gain new emphasis through policies that stress personal integrity, respect for the individual, equal opportunity for all races and sexes, citizenship awareness and community involvement. Those same policies will also serve as the foundation for a work environment free of sexual harassment, fraternization, and other practices that may threaten good order and discipline.

The evolutionary process that changed the Navy over the past three decades was the result of visionary leaders who could see beyond timehonored traditions to a Navy that cares for its people. To weather the "winds of change," whatever they may bring, Navy leadership, both officer and enlisted, must never lose sight of the vision it had 25 years ago - that people, not machines, run the U.S. Navy.



The Chief with the three stars above eagle and chevron signify the highest enlisted position in the Navy.

About the Author

Charlotte D. (Roberts) Crist is the daughter of a WWII Navy veteran. As a child, she loved listening to her dad's stories about his experiences as a sailor, first as a crewmember of *Yorktown* lost in the Battle of Midway, and then as a member of the crew that rebuilt the battleship *West Virginia* and returned her to full duty in the final years of the war.

Following her enlistment and basic training in 1964, Crist spent the next three years writing for the base newspaper at Naval Air Station, Norfolk, Va. It was during her first stint that the first MCPON took office. At the end of her enlistment, she returned to her home in South Georgia. In 1968 she reentered the Navy and within that same year, she married a submariner and was discharged due to pregnancy. Thirteen years later, she affiliated with the Naval Reserve and was assigned to Atlantic Fleet Audiovisual Unit 186 at NAS Norfolk, Va., as a seaman journalist. In 1983, her unit split into two units and she became a member of Naval Reserve Atlantic Fleet Psychological Operations Audiovisual Unit 286. As the unit's senior journalist, she researched and prepared scripts, served as on-camera talent for several news shows and documentaries, and participated in annual multi-service exercises including Ocean Venture and Solid Shield.

In 1989, Crist served four months in the office of the Master Chief Petty



(Left to right) MCPON Billy Sanders, MCPON Duane Bushey, MCPON Tom Crow, JO1 Charlotte Crist, MCPON Bill Plackett, MCPON Bob Walker, and MCPON Del Black.

Officer of the Navy as a special public affairs assistant during the different levels of competition and recognition for the Sailor of the Year program. In 1990, she returned to the MCPON's office for four months of temporary active duty. The four months became 17 months. During her final year in the office, she conducted a near-herculean research and interview process that resulted in this historical account. In April 1992, Crist was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal for writing *Winds of Change*.

When not in uniform as a Reservist, Crist worked as a reporter for a weekly newspaper in Virginia writing numerous feature articles on the history, personality, and environment of two Virginia counties. Crist made her mark by writing a column entitled "Grassroots." She left the newspaper in 1988.

In December 1991, Crist became reaffiliated in the Naval Reserve and is a member of AVU 286 once again. She lives on a small farm in Mathews, Va.,

where she enjoys working on her tractor and spending time with her twoyear-old grandson, Cory.